ROMANCES OF THE WEST

REAL COWBOY LOVE STORIES

a LOVERS magazine

MARCH NO. 2

10¢

the MARSHAL TAKES a WIFE!

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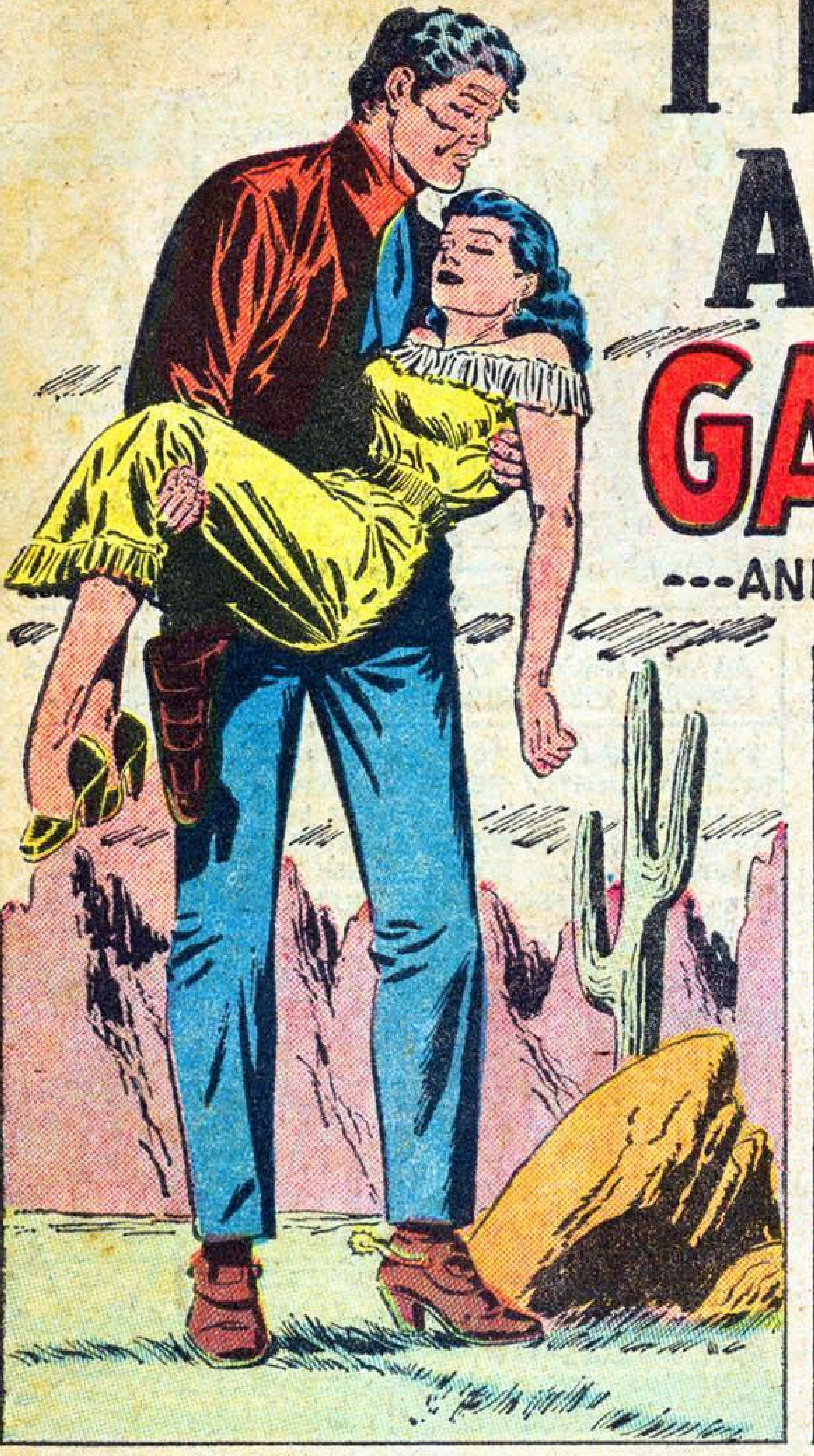
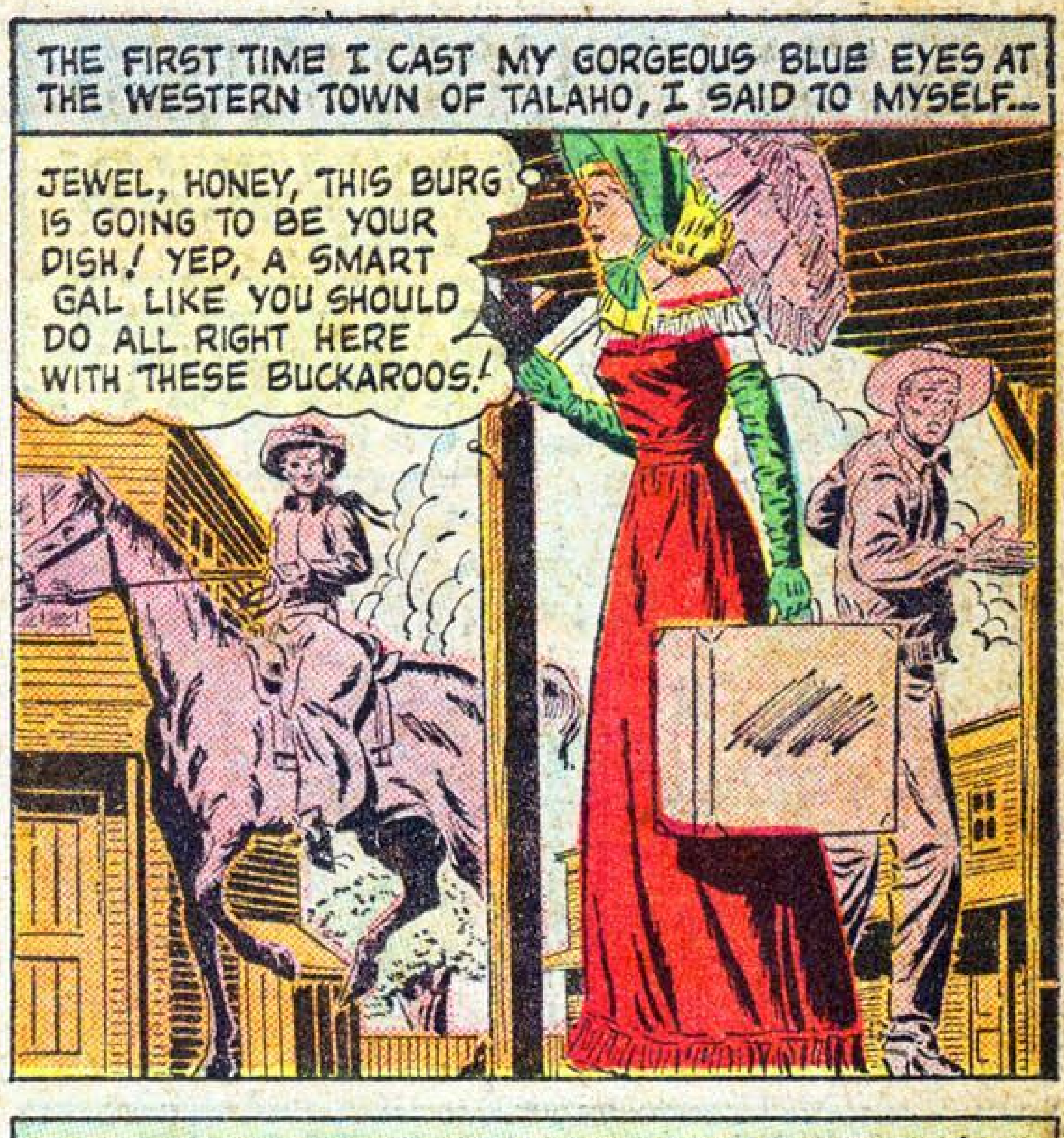
I DIDN'T SUSPECT THE VIOLENCE AND TRAGEDY WHICH FOLLOWED IN THE WAKE OF MY SELFISH ROMANCE!

I RUSTLED ANOTHER GAL'S MAN!

---AND I LIVED TO REGRET IT!

6870

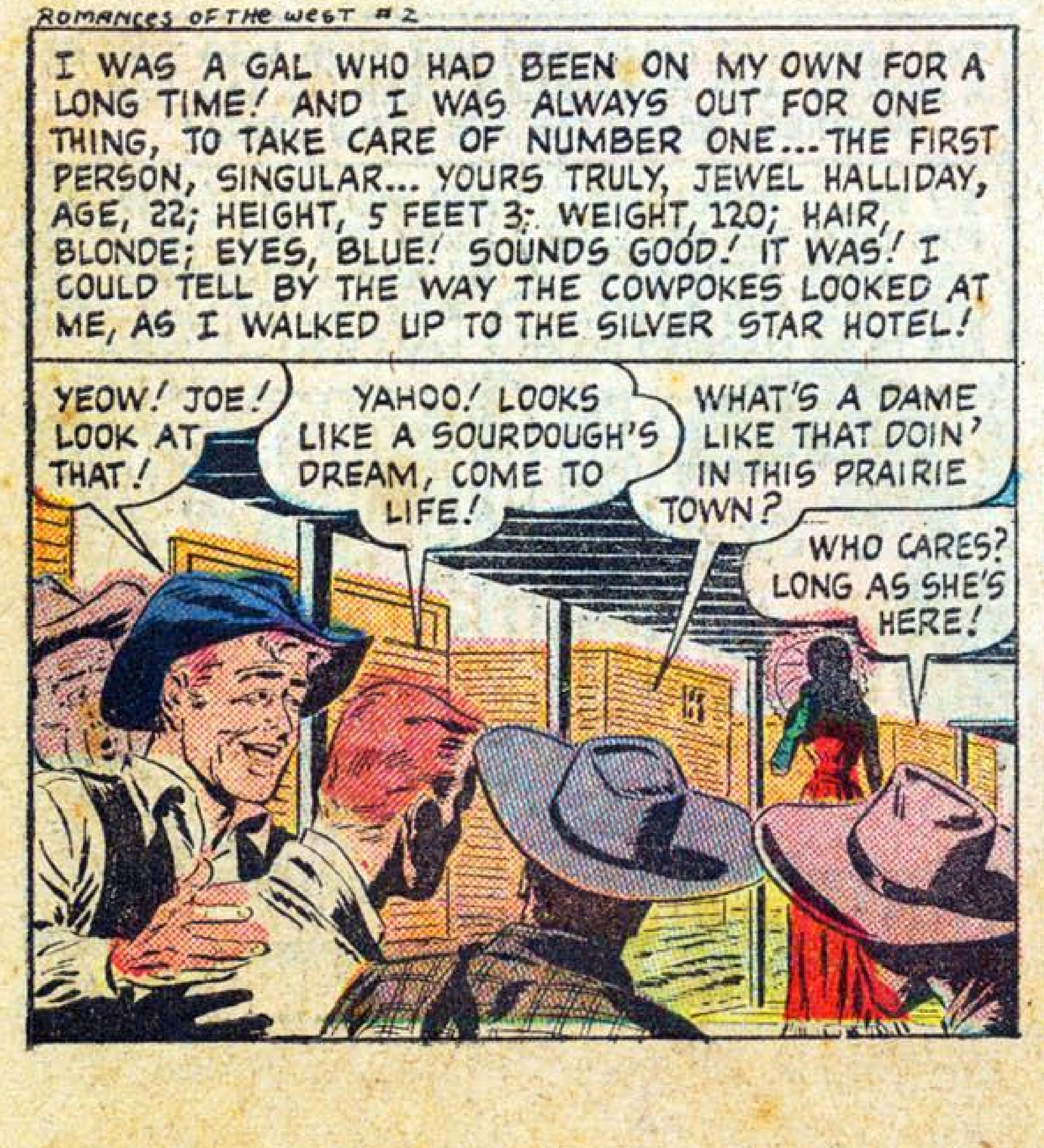




THE FIRST TIME I CAST MY GORGEOUS BLUE EYES AT THE WESTERN TOWN OF TALAHO, I SAID TO MYSELF...

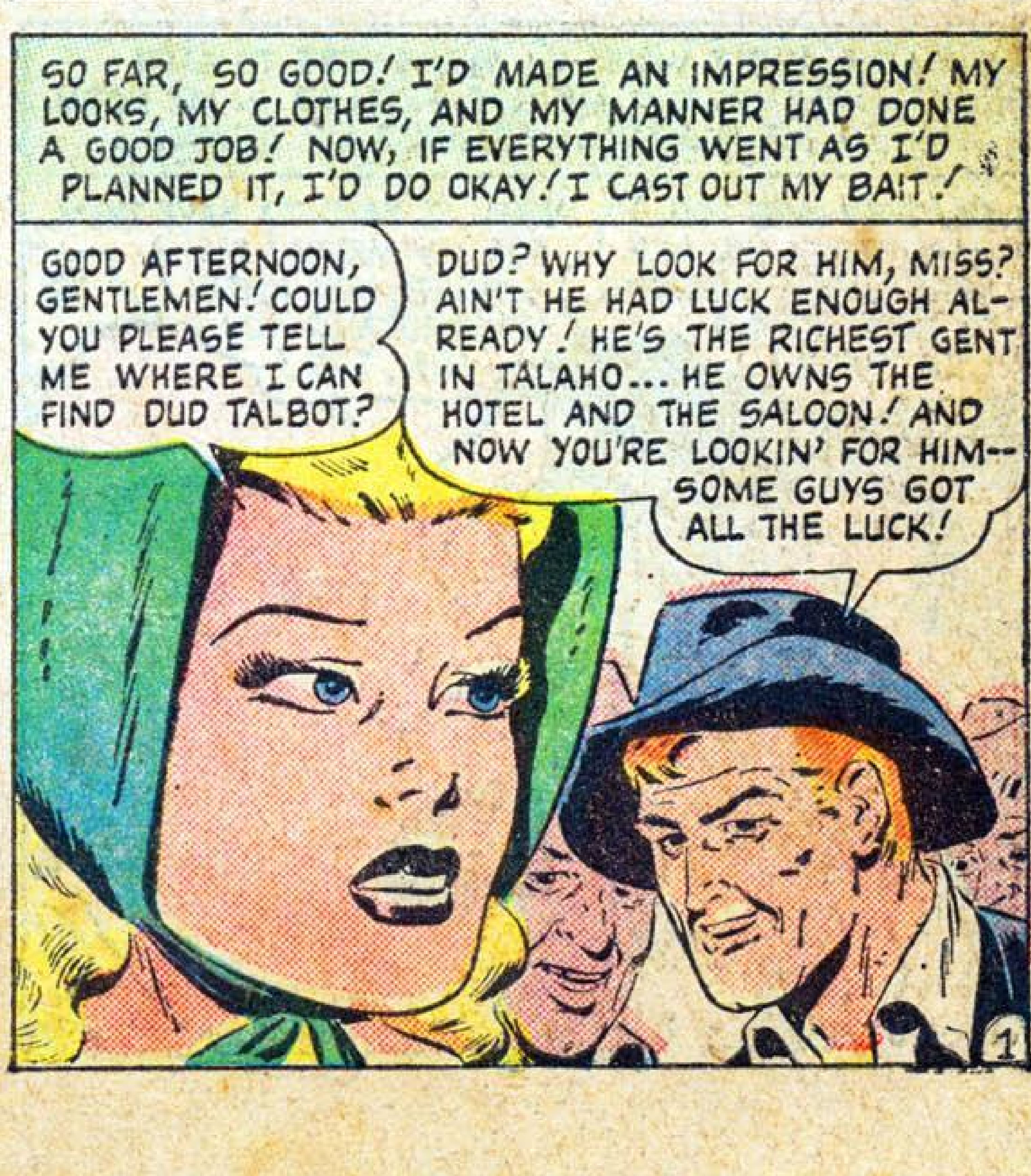
JEWEL, HONEY, THIS BURG IS GOING TO BE YOUR DISH! YEP, A SMART GAL LIKE YOU SHOULD DO ALL RIGHT HERE WITH THESE BUCKAROOS!

ROMANCES OF THE WEST #2



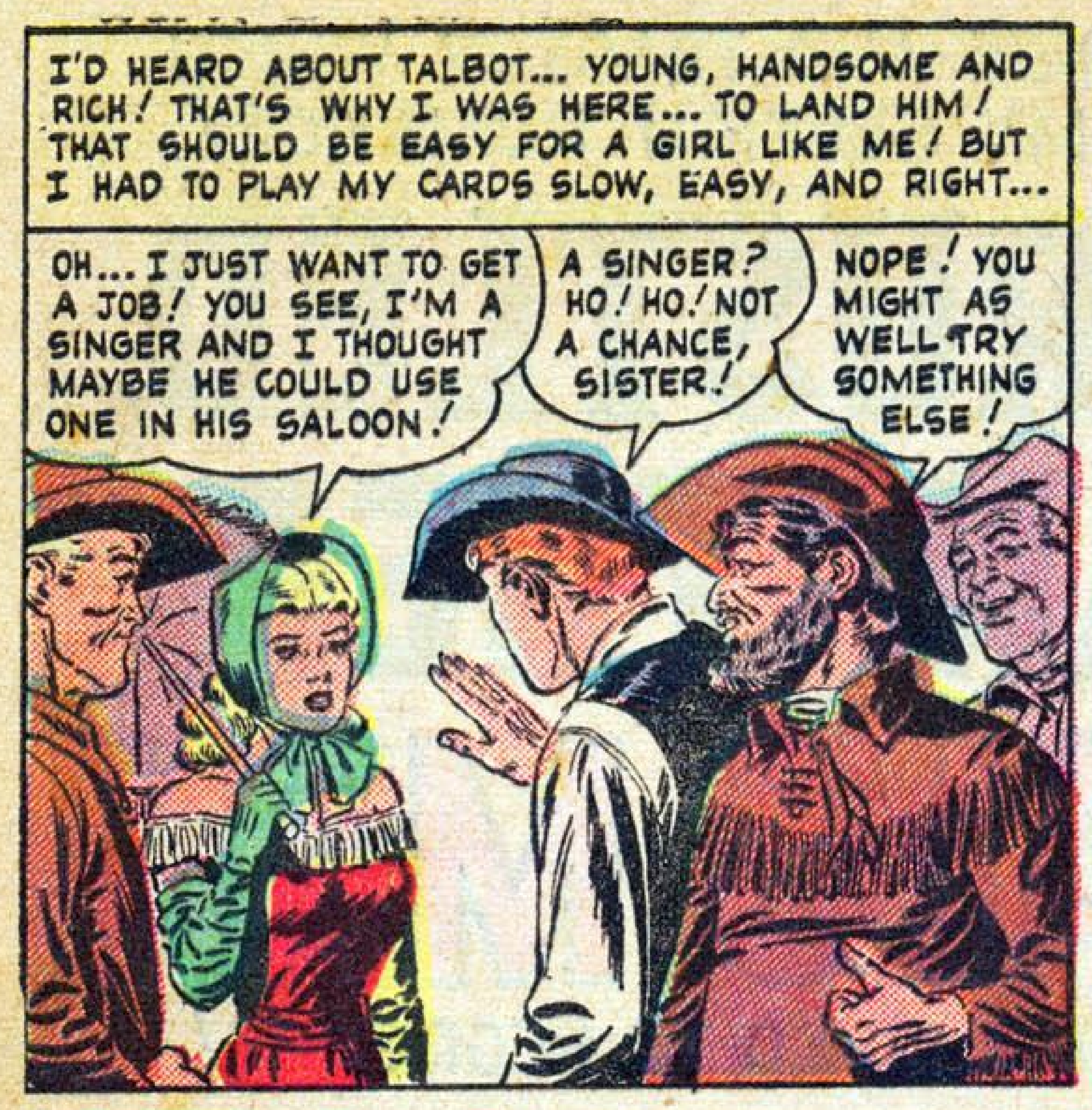
I WAS A GAL WHO HAD BEEN ON MY OWN FOR A LONG TIME! AND I WAS ALWAYS OUT FOR ONE THING, TO TAKE CARE OF NUMBER ONE... THE FIRST PERSON, SINGULAR... YOURS TRULY, JEWEL HALLIDAY, AGE, 22; HEIGHT, 5 FEET 3; WEIGHT, 120; HAIR, BLONDE; EYES, BLUE! SOUNDS GOOD! IT WAS! I COULD TELL BY THE WAY THE COWPOKES LOOKED AT ME, AS I WALKED UP TO THE SILVER STAR HOTEL!

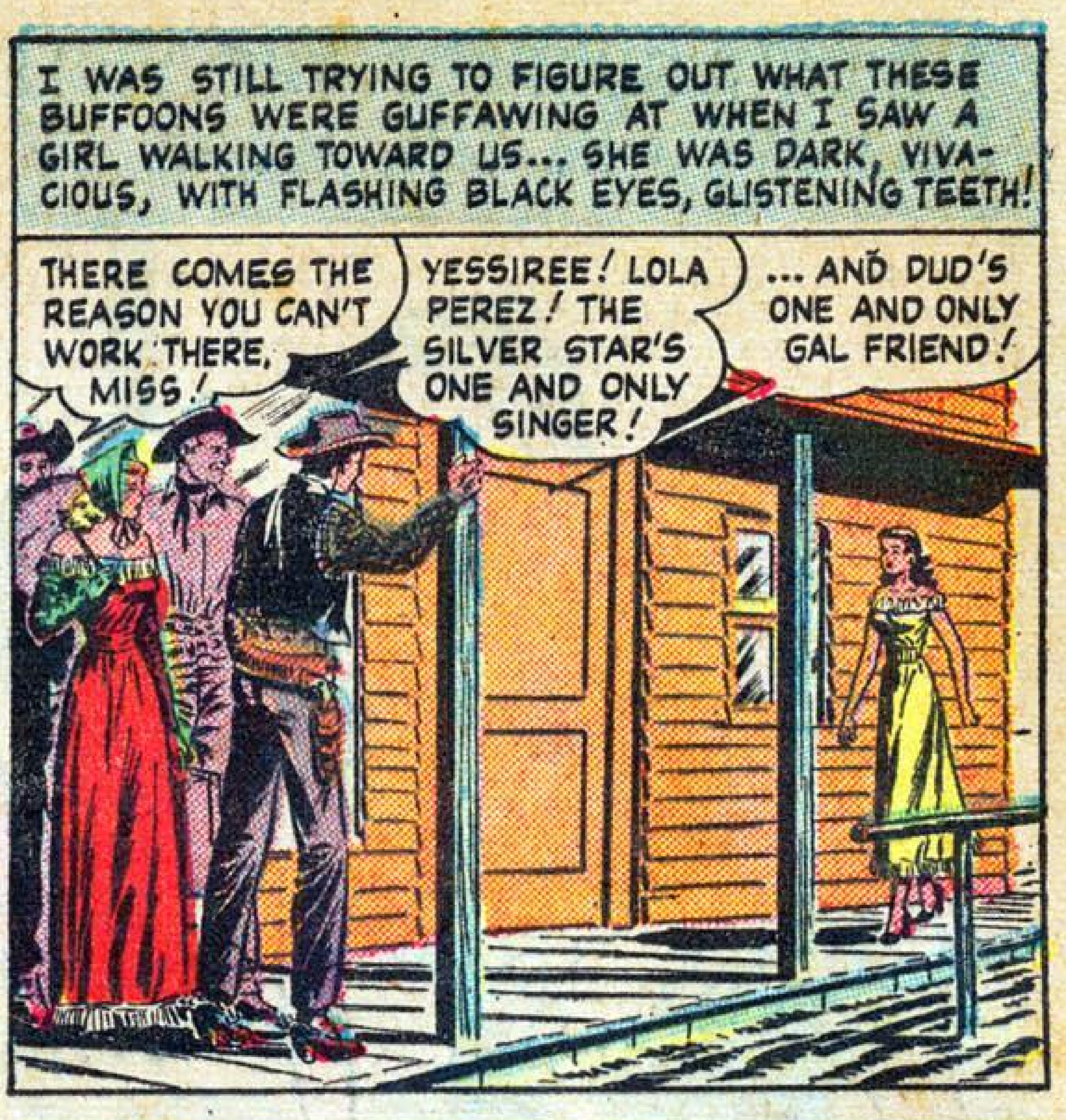
YEOW! JOE! LOOK AT THAT!
YAHOO! LOOKS LIKE A SOURDOUGH'S DREAM, COME TO LIFE!
WHAT'S A DAME LIKE THAT DOIN' IN THIS PRAIRIE TOWN?
WHO CARES? LONG AS SHE'S HERE!

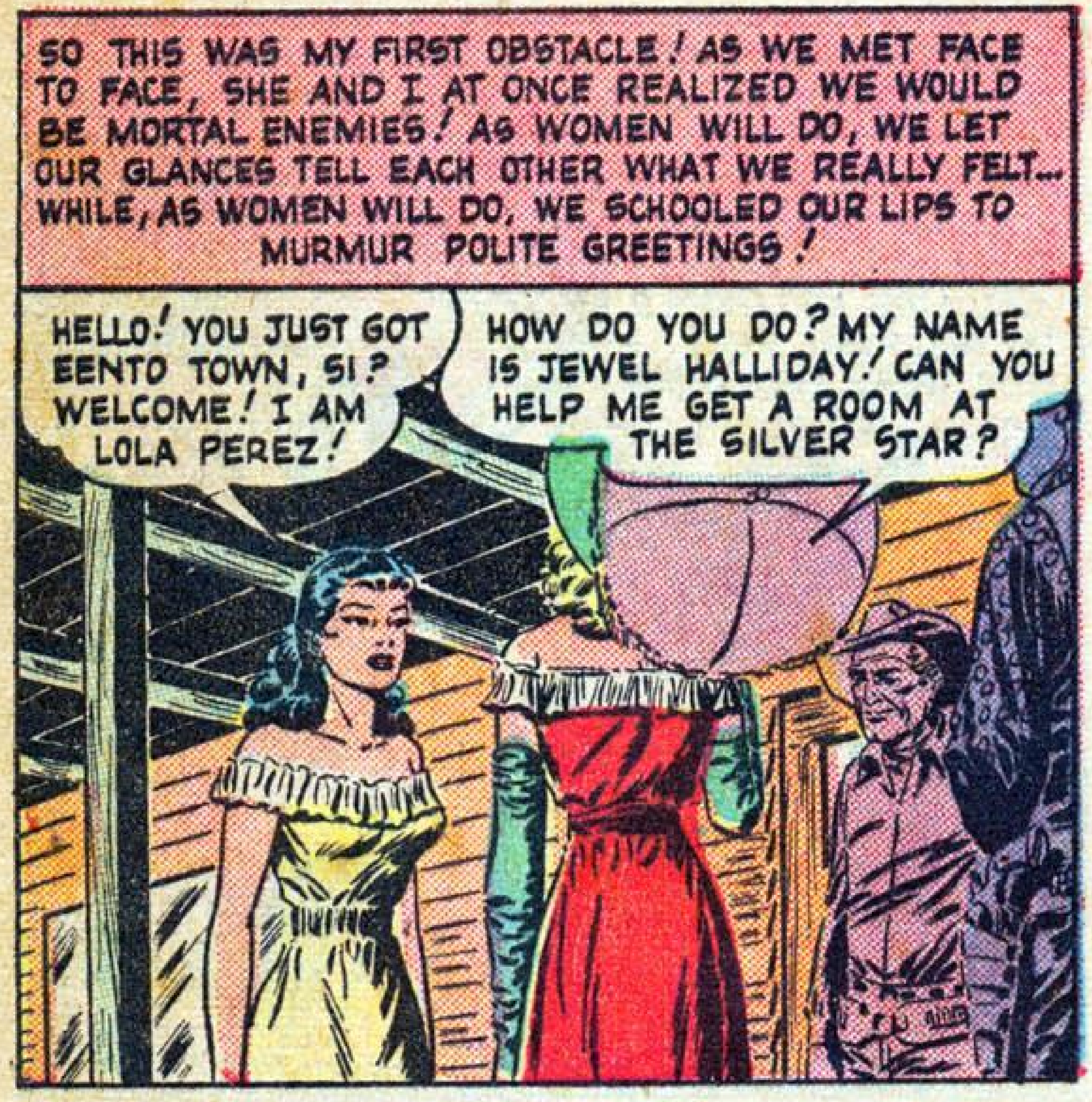


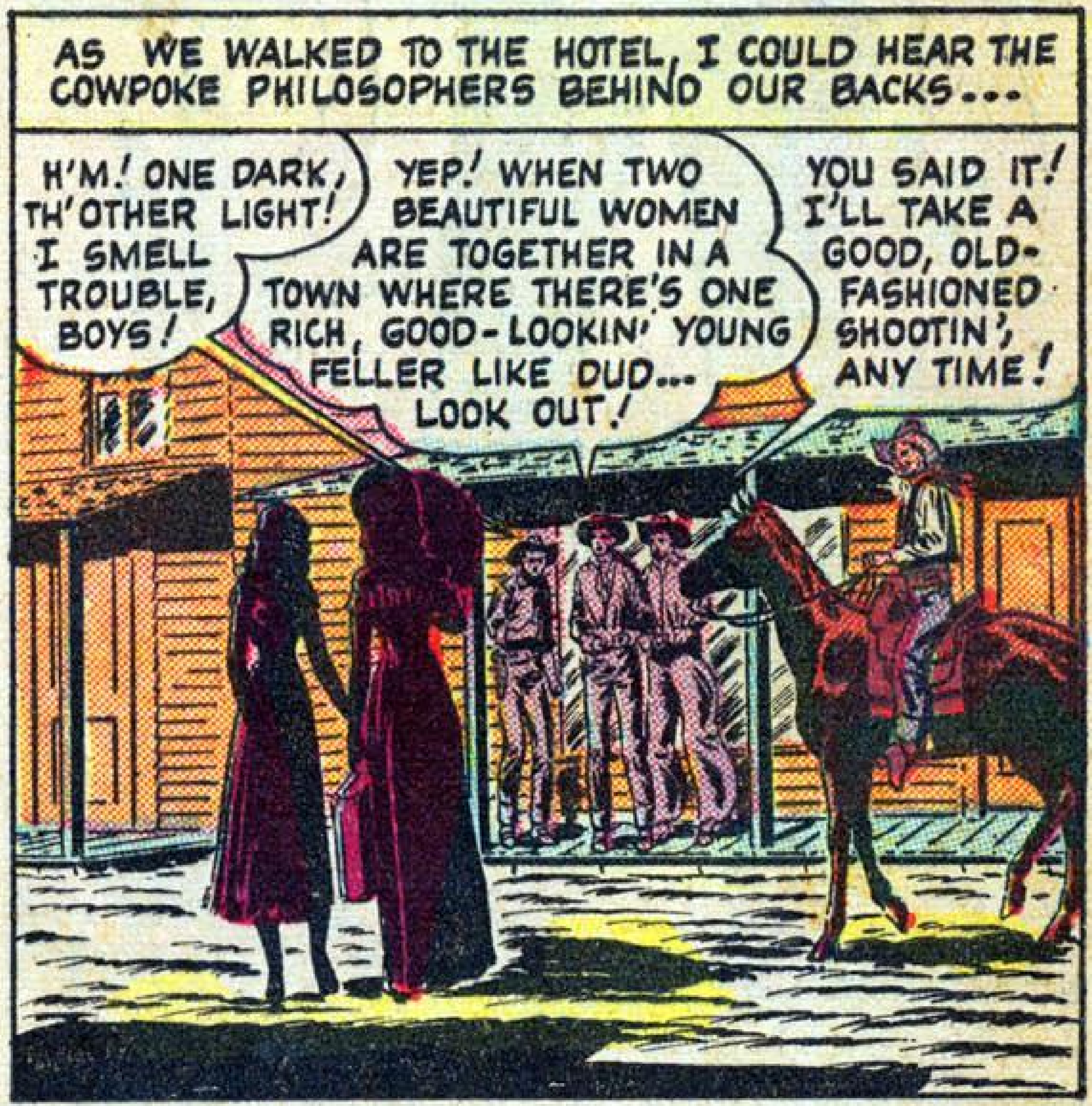
SO FAR, SO GOOD! I'D MADE AN IMPRESSION! MY LOOKS, MY CLOTHES, AND MY MANNER HAD DONE A GOOD JOB! NOW, IF EVERYTHING WENT AS I'D PLANNED IT, I'D DO OKAY! I CAST OUT MY BAIT!

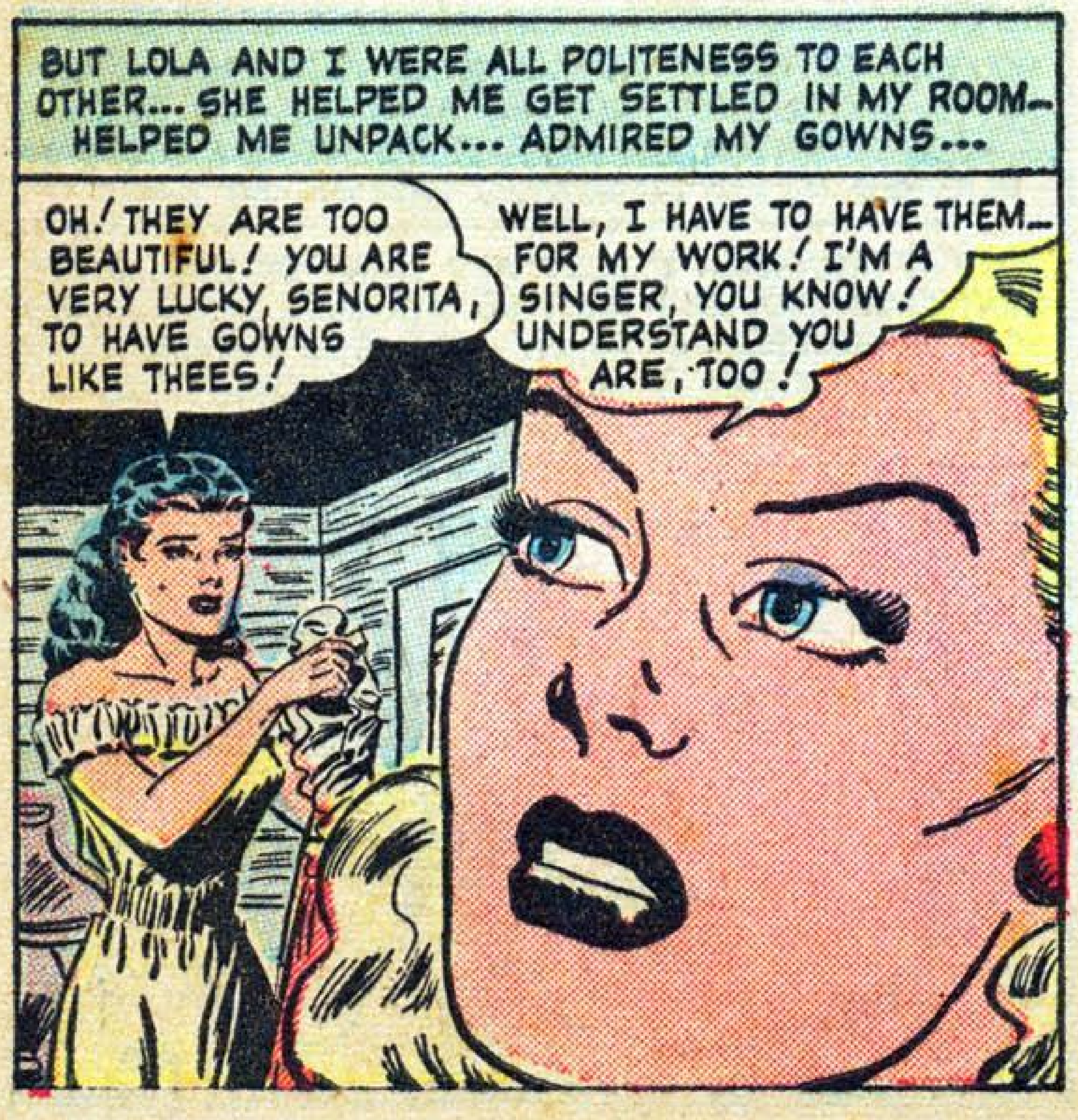
GOOD AFTERNOON, GENTLEMEN! COULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND DUD TALBOT?
DUD? WHY LOOK FOR HIM, MISS? AIN'T HE HAD LUCK ENOUGH ALREADY! HE'S THE RICHEST GENT IN TALAHO... HE OWNS THE HOTEL AND THE SALOON! AND NOW YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR HIM--SOME GUYS GOT ALL THE LUCK!

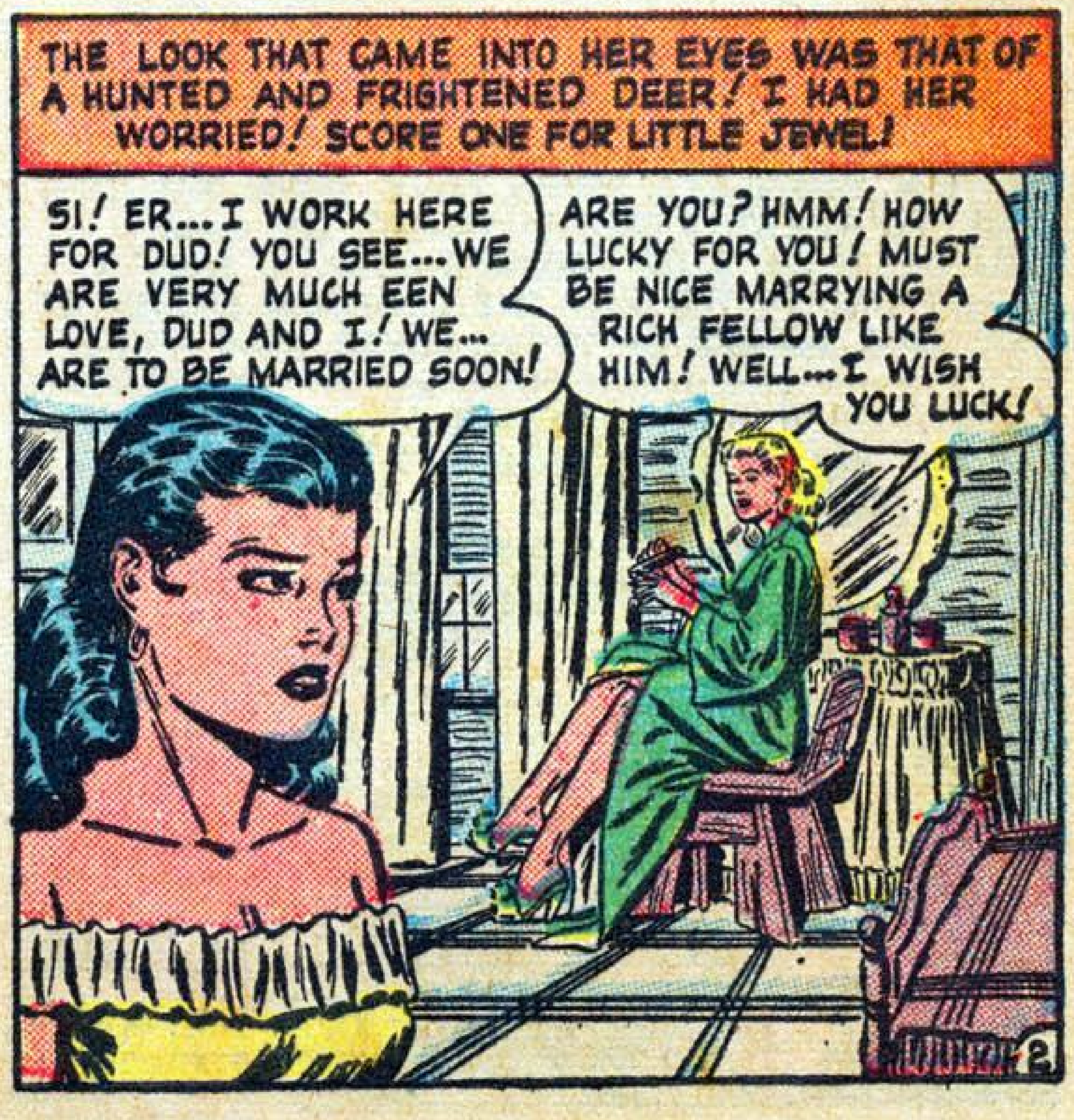

I'D HEARD ABOUT TALBOT... YOUNG, HANDSOME AND RICH! THAT'S WHY I WAS HERE... TO LAND HIM! THAT SHOULD BE EASY FOR A GIRL LIKE ME! BUT I HAD TO PLAY MY CARDS SLOW, EASY, AND RIGHT...
OH... I JUST WANT TO GET A JOB! YOU SEE, I'M A SINGER AND I THOUGHT MAYBE HE COULD USE ONE IN HIS SALOON!
A SINGER? HO! HO! NOT A CHANCE, SISTER!
NOPE! YOU MIGHT AS WELL TRY SOMETHING ELSE!

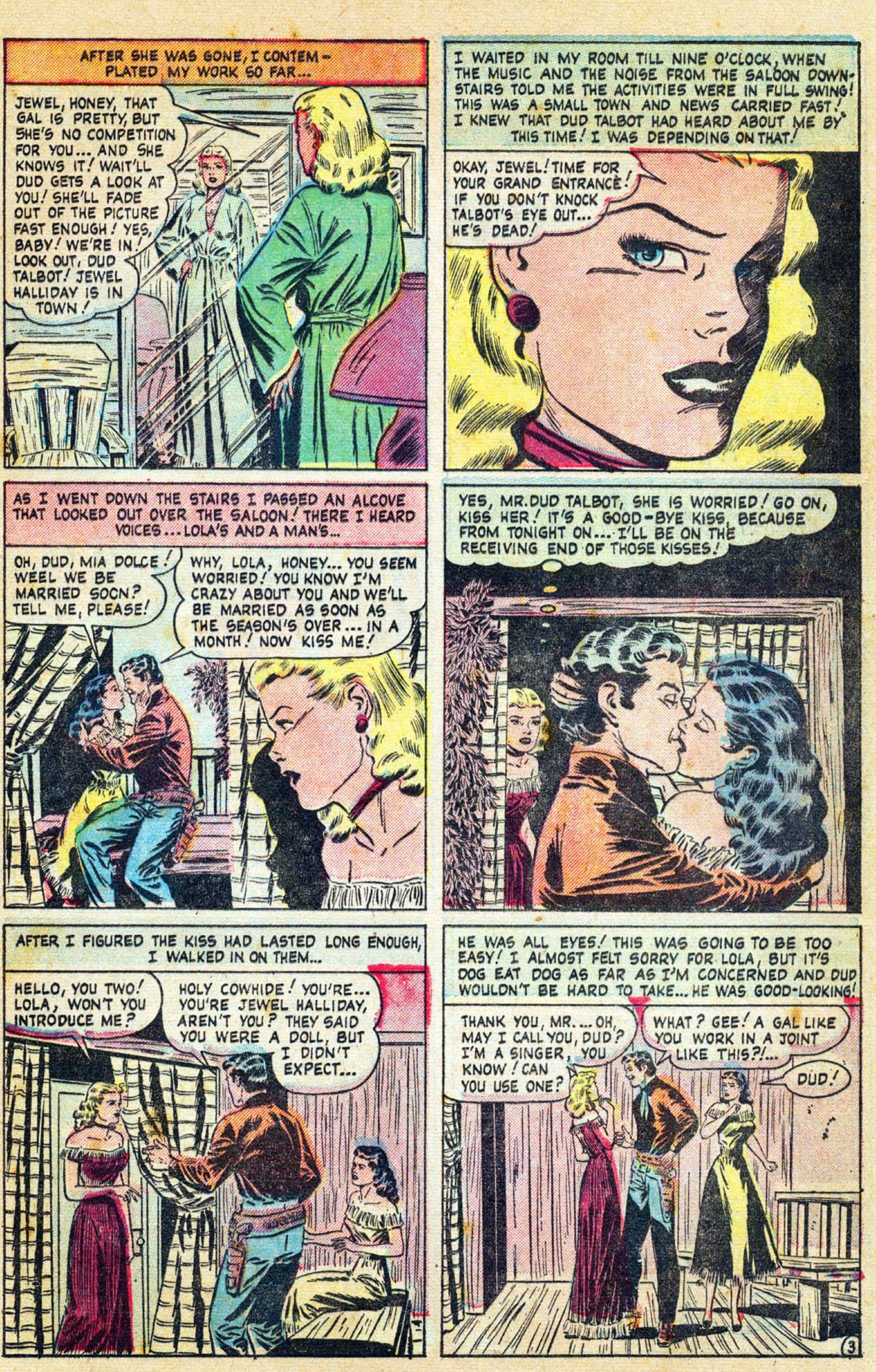

I WAS STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THESE BUFFOONS WERE GUFFAWING AT WHEN I SAW A GIRL WALKING TOWARD US... SHE WAS DARK, VIVACIOUS, WITH FLASHING BLACK EYES, GLISTENING TEETH!
THERE COMES THE REASON YOU CAN'T WORK THERE, MISS!
YESSIREE! LOLA PEREZ! THE SILVER STAR'S ONE AND ONLY SINGER!
... AND DUD'S ONE AND ONLY GAL FRIEND!

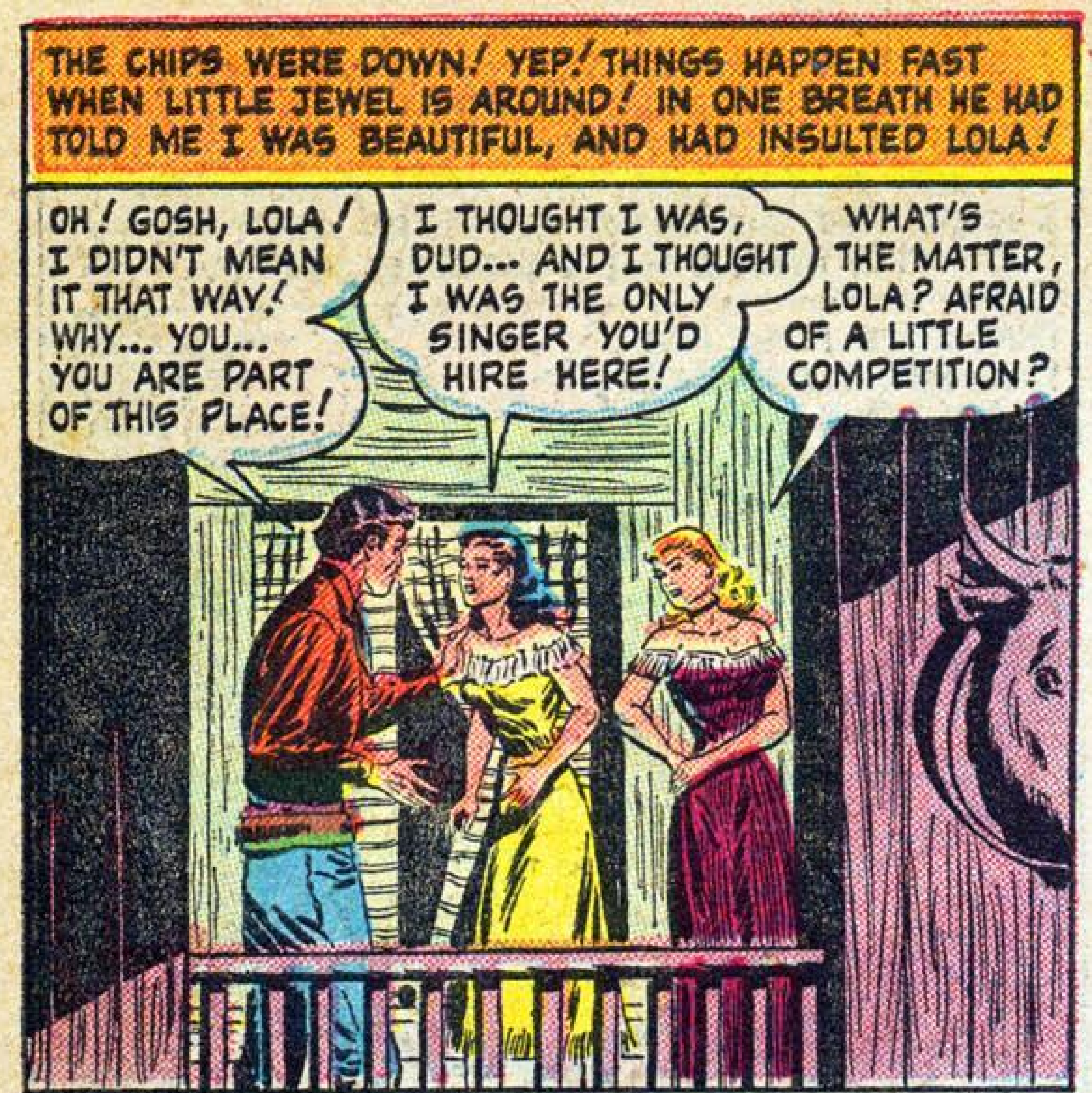

SO THIS WAS MY FIRST OBSTACLE! AS WE MET FACE TO FACE, SHE AND I AT ONCE REALIZED WE WOULD BE MORTAL ENEMIES! AS WOMEN WILL DO, WE LET OUR GLANCES TELL EACH OTHER WHAT WE REALLY FELT... WHILE, AS WOMEN WILL DO, WE SCHOOLED OUR LIPS TO MURMUR POLITE GREETINGS!
HELLO! YOU JUST GOT EENTO TOWN, SI? WELCOME! I AM LOLA PEREZ!
HOW DO YOU DO? MY NAME IS JEWEL HALLIDAY! CAN YOU HELP ME GET A ROOM AT THE SILVER STAR?

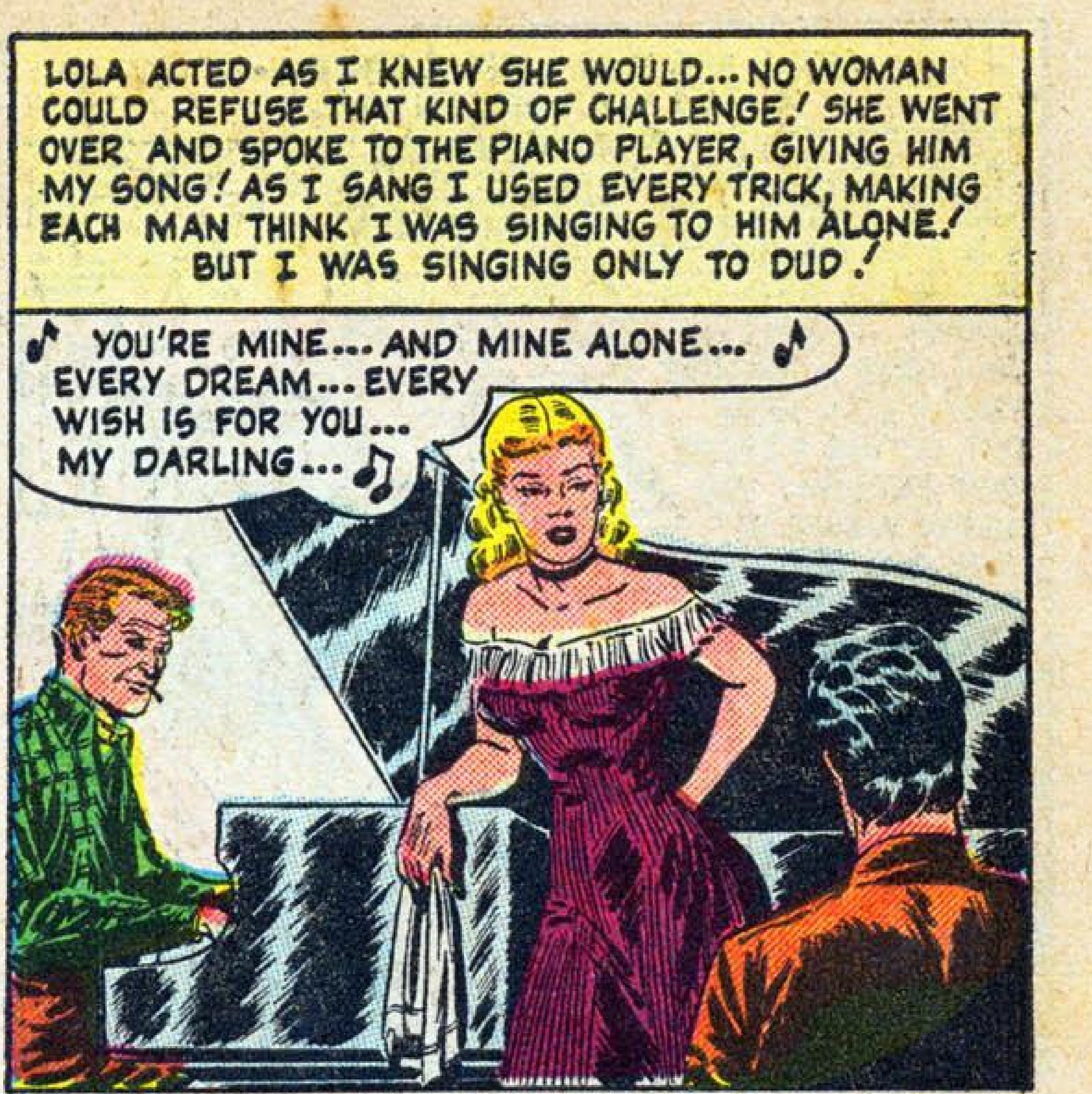

AS WE WALKED TO THE HOTEL, I COULD HEAR THE COWPOKE PHILOSOPHERS BEHIND OUR BACKS...
H'M! ONE DARK, TH'OTHER LIGHT! I SMELL TROUBLE, BOYS!
YEP! WHEN TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN ARE TOGETHER IN A TOWN WHERE THERE'S ONE RICH, GOOD-LOOKIN' YOUNG FELLER LIKE DUD... LOOK OUT!
YOU SAID IT! I'LL TAKE A GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED SHOOTIN', ANY TIME!

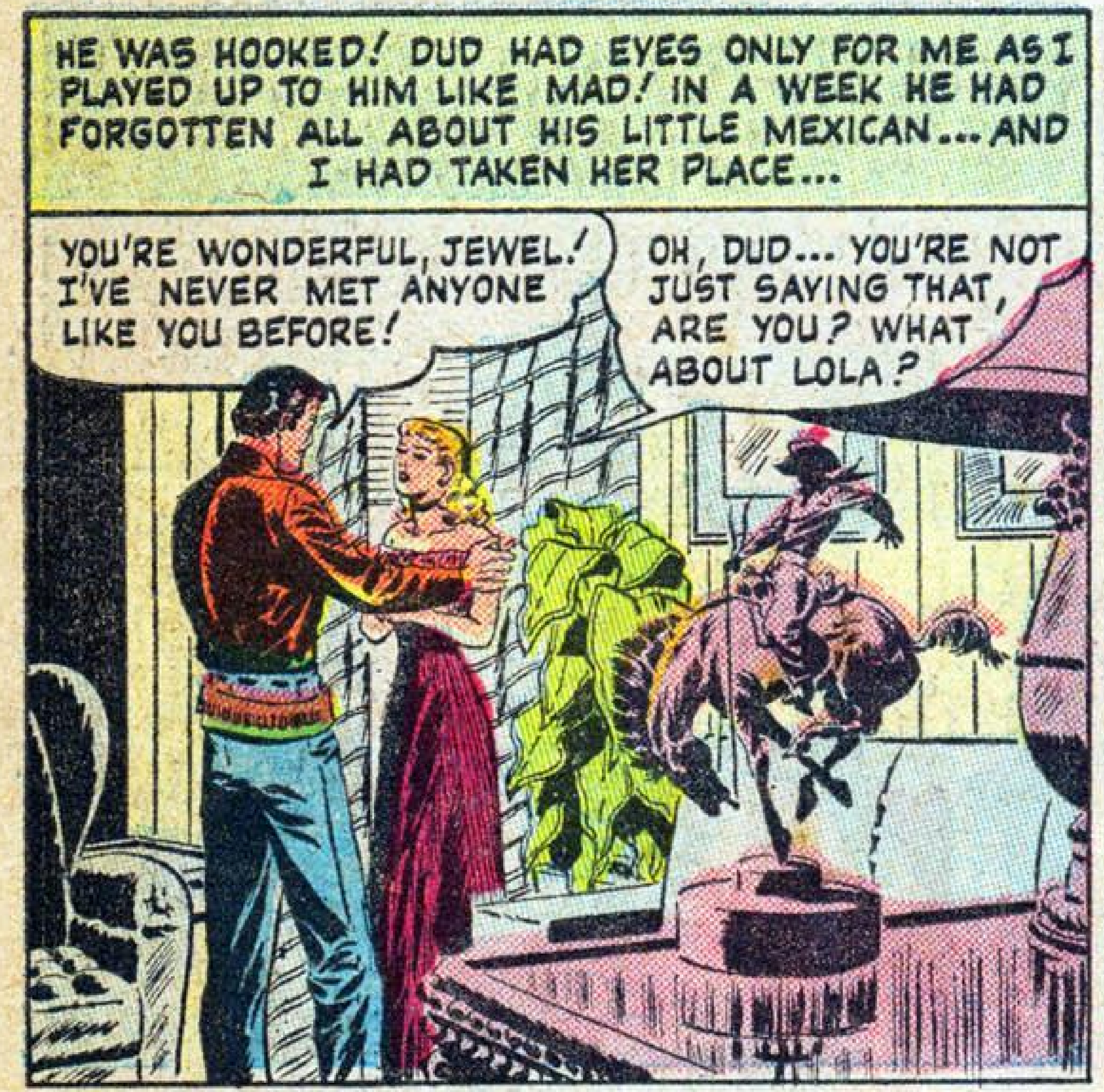

BUT LOLA AND I WERE ALL POLITENESS TO EACH OTHER... SHE HELPED ME GET SETTLED IN MY ROOM-- HELPED ME UNPACK... ADMIRED MY GOWNS...
OH! THEY ARE TOO BEAUTIFUL! YOU ARE VERY LUCKY, SENORITA, TO HAVE GOWNS LIKE THEES!
WELL, I HAVE TO HAVE THEM-- FOR MY WORK! I'M A SINGER, YOU KNOW! UNDERSTAND YOU ARE, TOO!

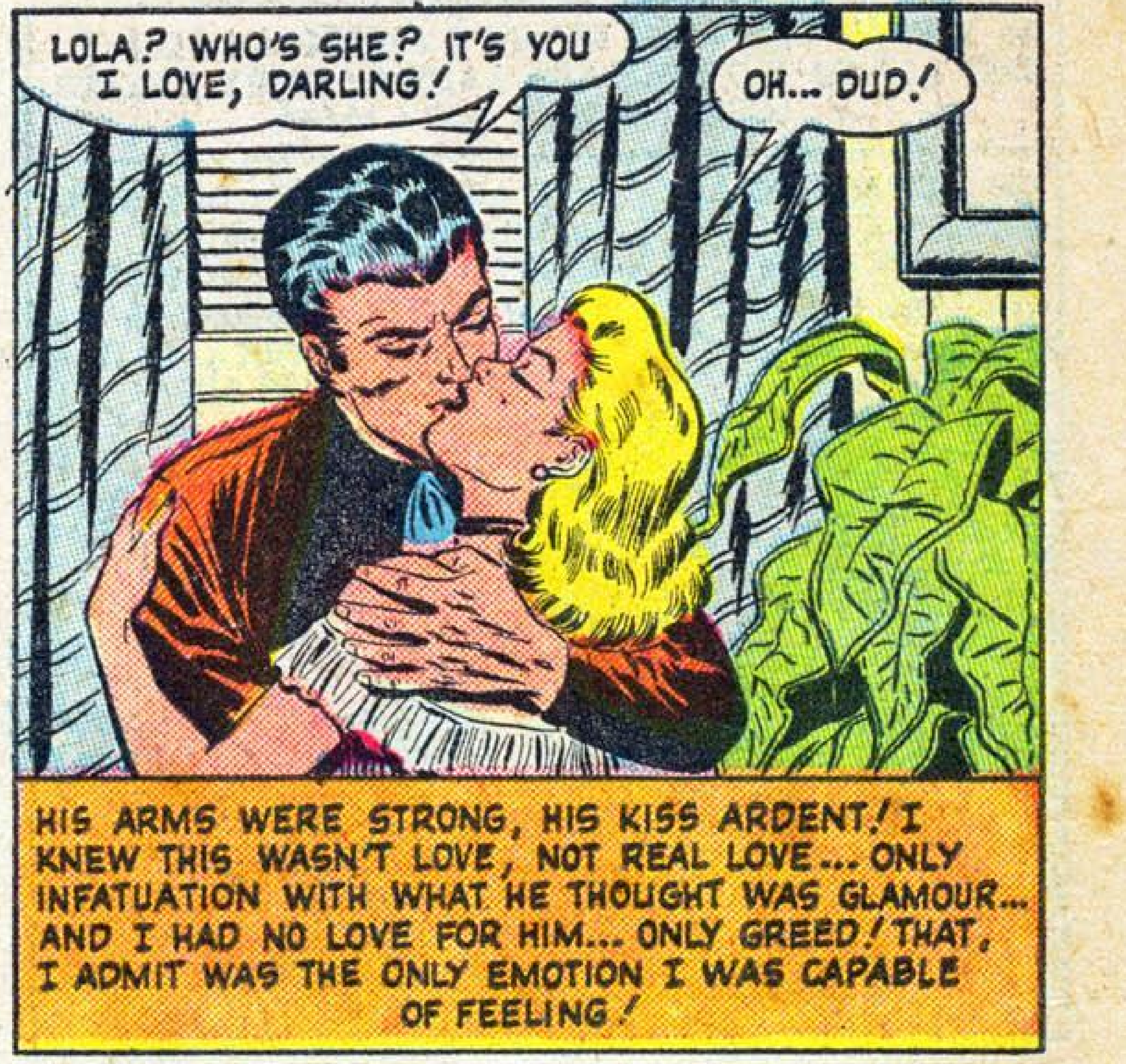

THE LOOK THAT CAME INTO HER EYES WAS THAT OF A HUNTED AND FRIGHTENED DEER! I HAD HER WORRIED! SCORE ONE FOR LITTLE JEWEL!
SI! ER... I WORK HERE FOR DUD! YOU SEE... WE ARE VERY MUCH EEN LOVE, DUD AND I! WE... ARE TO BE MARRIED SOON!
ARE YOU? HMM! HOW LUCKY FOR YOU! MUST BE NICE MARRYING A RICH FELLOW LIKE HIM! WELL... I WISH YOU LUCK!

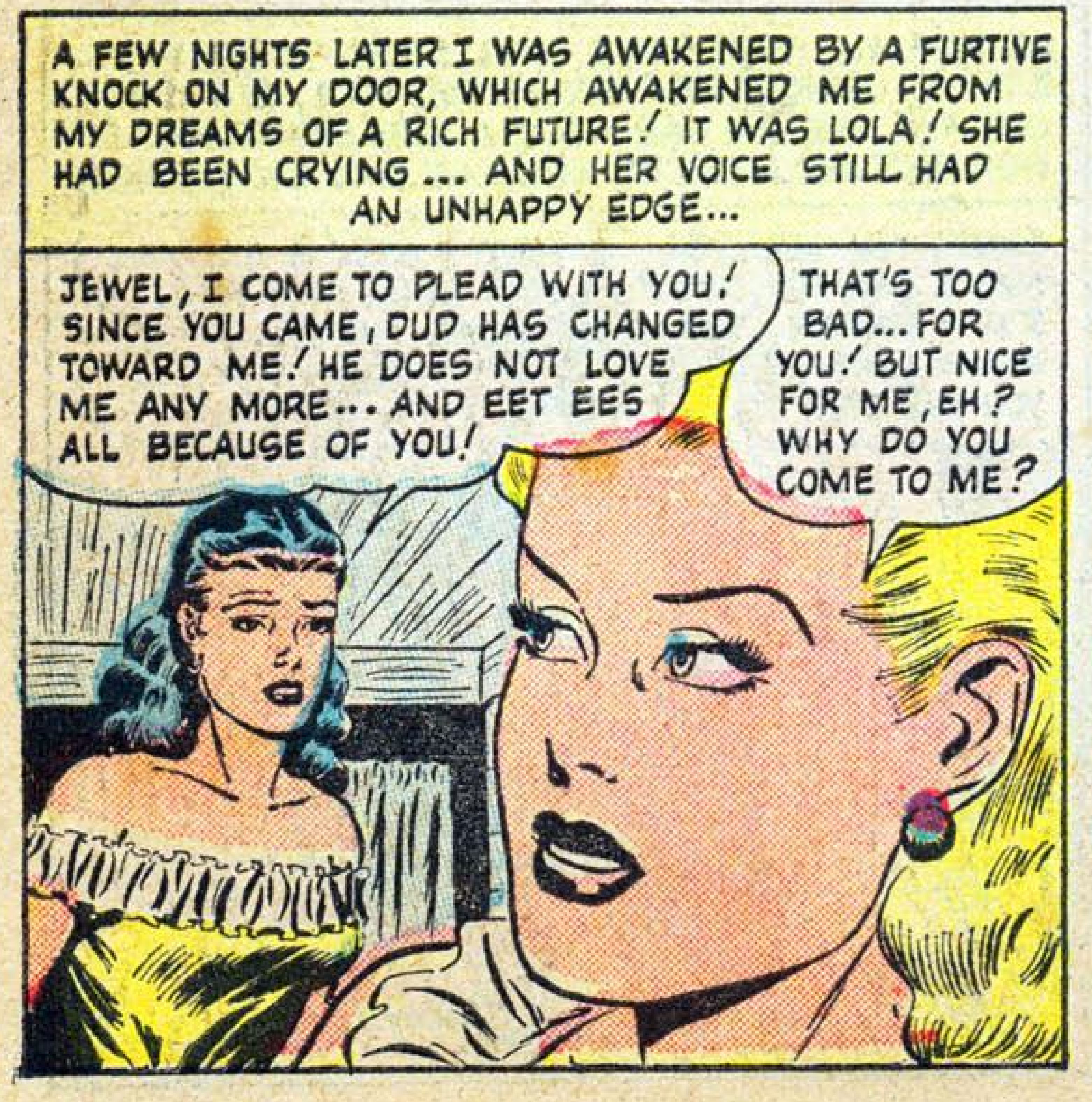

AFTER SHE WAS GONE, I CONTEMPLATED MY WORK SO FAR...
JEWEL, HONEY, THAT GAL IS PRETTY, BUT SHE'S NO COMPETITION FOR YOU... AND SHE KNOWS IT! WAIT'LL DUD GETS A LOOK AT YOU! SHE'LL FADE OUT OF THE PICTURE FAST ENOUGH! YES, BABY! WE'RE IN! LOOK OUT, DUD TALBOT! JEWEL HALLIDAY IS IN TOWN!
I WAITED IN MY ROOM TILL NINE O'CLOCK, WHEN THE MUSIC AND THE NOISE FROM THE SALOON DOWNSTAIRS TOLD ME THE ACTIVITIES WERE IN FULL SWING! THIS WAS A SMALL TOWN AND NEWS CARRIED FAST! I KNEW THAT DUD TALBOT HAD HEARD ABOUT ME BY THIS TIME! I WAS DEPENDING ON THAT!
OKAY, JEWEL! TIME FOR YOUR GRAND ENTRANCE! IF YOU DON'T KNOCK TALBOT'S EYE OUT... HE'S DEAD!
AS I WENT DOWN THE STAIRS I PASSED AN ALCOVE THAT LOOKED OUT OVER THE SALOON! THERE I HEARD VOICES... LOLA'S AND A MAN'S...
OH, DUD, MIA DOLCE! WEEL WE BE MARRIED SOON? TELL ME, PLEASE!
WHY, LOLA, HONEY... YOU SEEM WORRIED! YOU KNOW I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU AND WE'LL BE MARRIED AS SOON AS THE SEASON'S OVER... IN A MONTH! NOW KISS ME!
YES, MR. DUD TALBOT, SHE IS WORRIED! GO ON, KISS HER! IT'S A GOOD-BYE KISS, BECAUSE FROM TONIGHT ON... I'LL BE ON THE RECEIVING END OF THOSE KISSES!
AFTER I FIGURED THE KISS HAD LASTED LONG ENOUGH, I WALKED IN ON THEM...
HELLO, YOU TWO! LOLA, WON'T YOU INTRODUCE ME?
HOLY COWHIDE! YOU'RE... YOU'RE JEWEL HALLIDAY, AREN'T YOU? THEY SAID YOU WERE A DOLL, BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT...
HE WAS ALL EYES! THIS WAS GOING TO BE TOO EASY! I ALMOST FELT SORRY FOR LOLA, BUT IT'S DOG EAT DOG AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED AND DUD WOULDN'T BE HARD TO TAKE... HE WAS GOOD-LOOKING!
THANK YOU, MR.... OH, MAY I CALL YOU, DUD? I'M A SINGER, YOU KNOW! CAN YOU USE ONE?
WHAT? GEE! A GAL LIKE YOU WORK IN A JOINT LIKE THIS?!...
DUD!

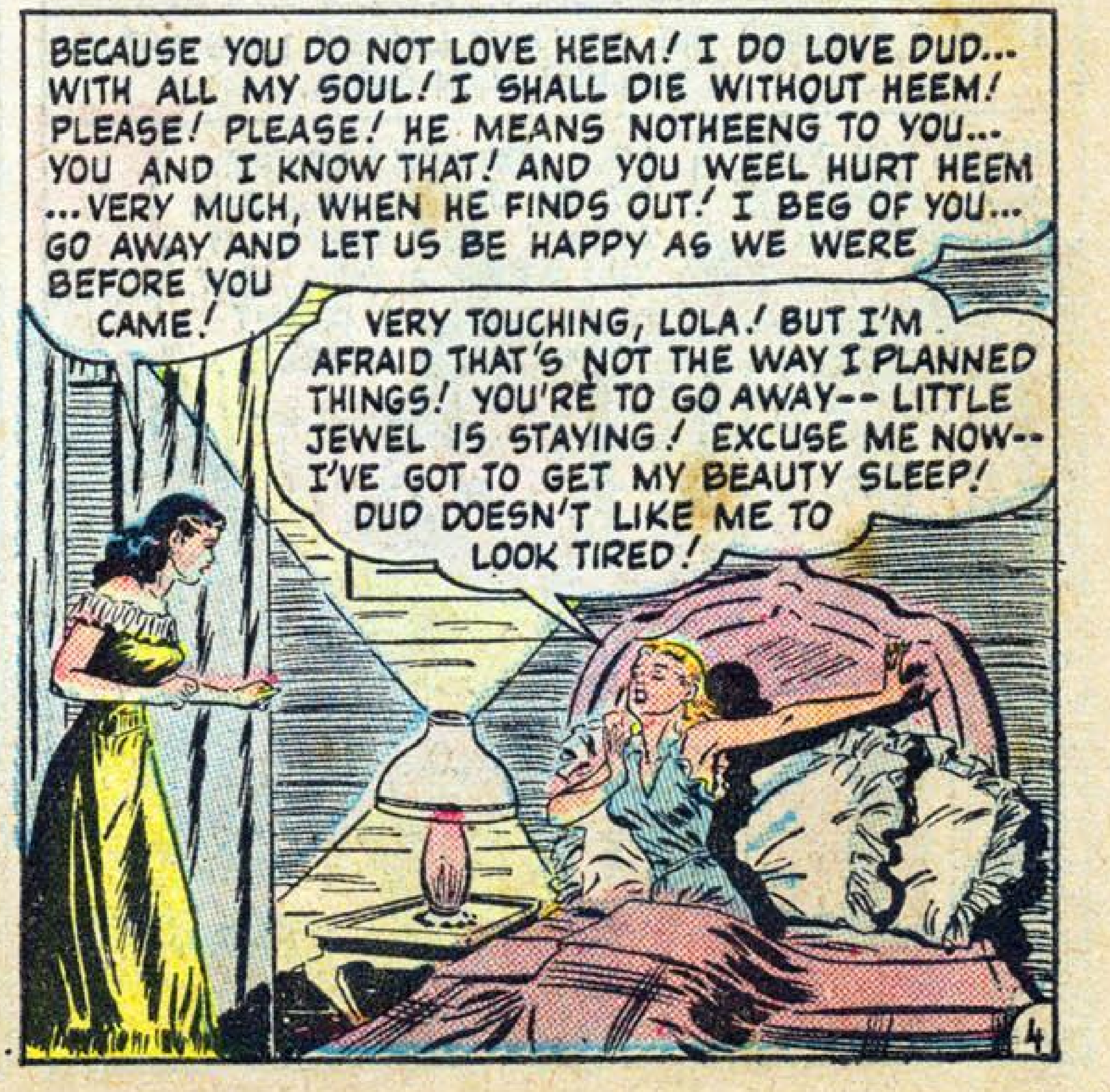

THE CHIPS WERE DOWN! YEP! THINGS HAPPEN FAST WHEN LITTLE JEWEL IS AROUND! IN ONE BREATH HE HAD TOLD ME I WAS BEAUTIFUL, AND HAD INSULTED LOLA!
OH! GOSH, LOLA! I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY! WHY... YOU... YOU ARE PART OF THIS PLACE!
I THOUGHT I WAS, DUD... AND I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY SINGER YOU'D HIRE HERE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, LOLA? AFRAID OF A LITTLE COMPETITION?

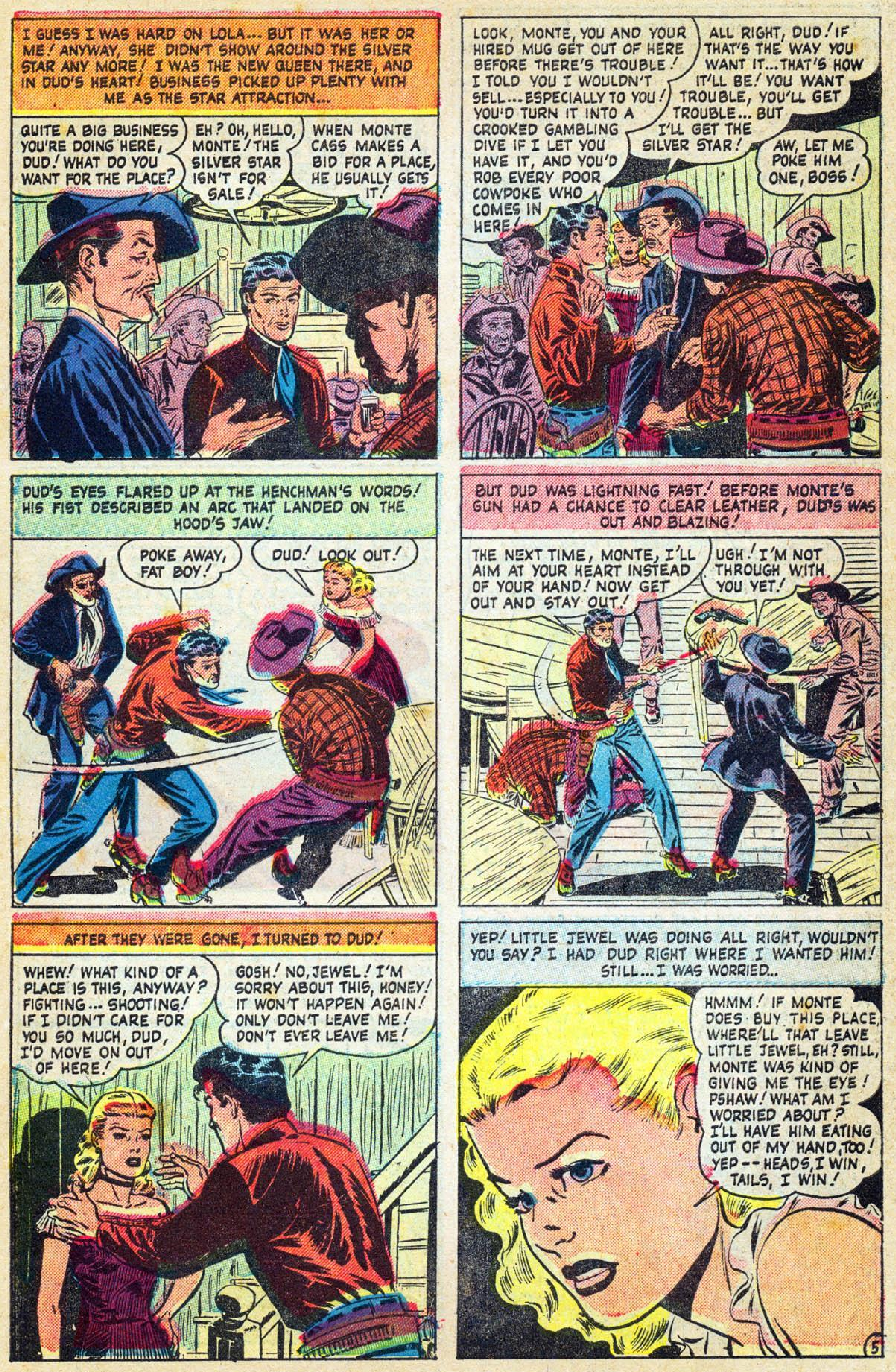

LOLA ACTED AS I KNEW SHE WOULD... NO WOMAN COULD REFUSE THAT KIND OF CHALLENGE! SHE WENT OVER AND SPOKE TO THE PIANO PLAYER, GIVING HIM MY SONG! AS I SANG I USED EVERY TRICK, MAKING EACH MAN THINK I WAS SINGING TO HIM ALONE! BUT I WAS SINGING ONLY TO DUD!
♪ YOU'RE MINE... AND MINE ALONE... ♪ EVERY DREAM... EVERY WISH IS FOR YOU... MY DARLING... ♪

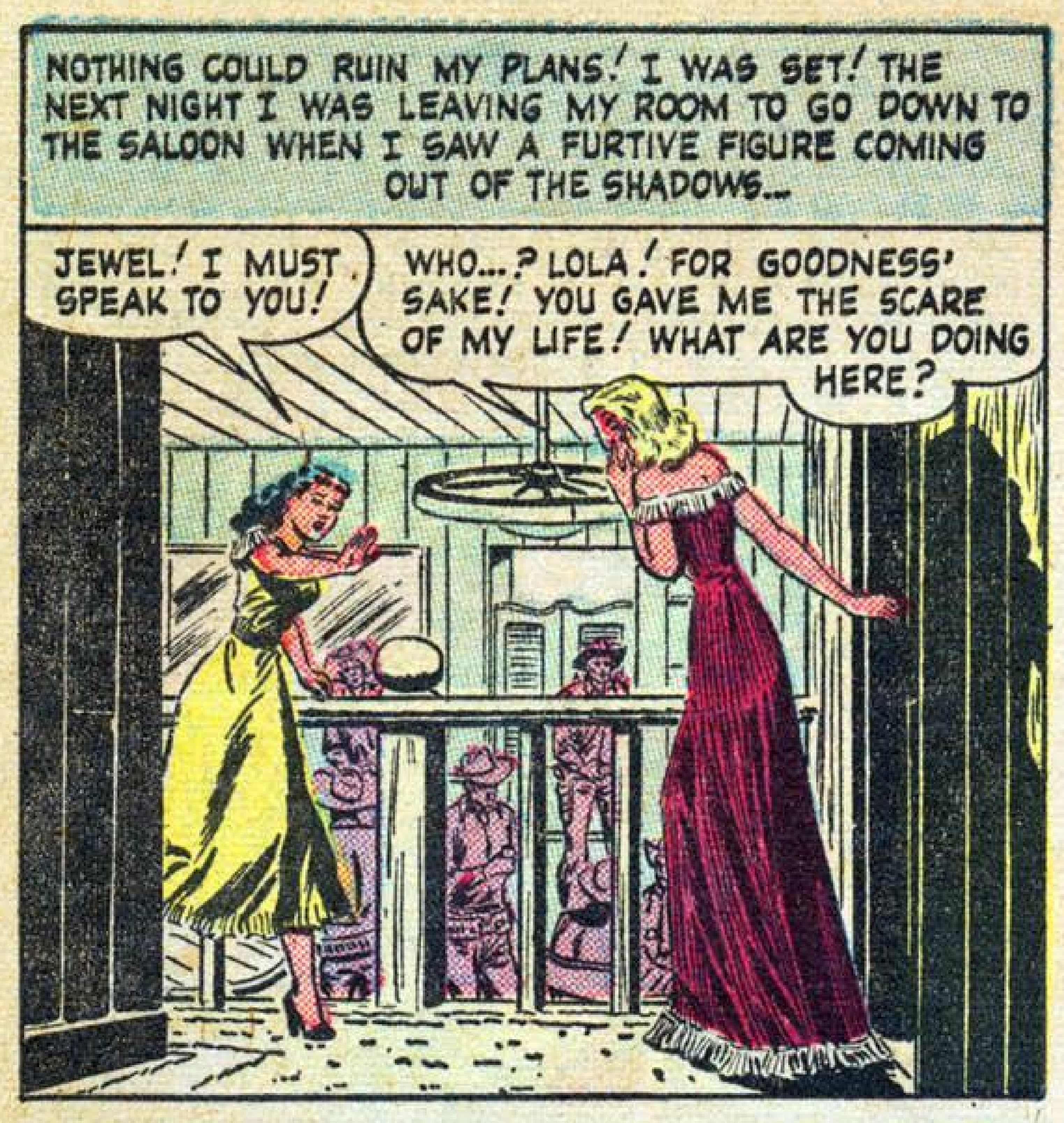

HE WAS HOOKED! DUD HAD EYES ONLY FOR ME AS I PLAYED UP TO HIM LIKE MAD! IN A WEEK HE HAD FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT HIS LITTLE MEXICAN... AND I HAD TAKEN HER PLACE...
YOU'RE WONDERFUL, JEWEL! I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE YOU BEFORE!
OH, DUD... YOU'RE NOT JUST SAYING THAT, ARE YOU? WHAT ABOUT LOLA?

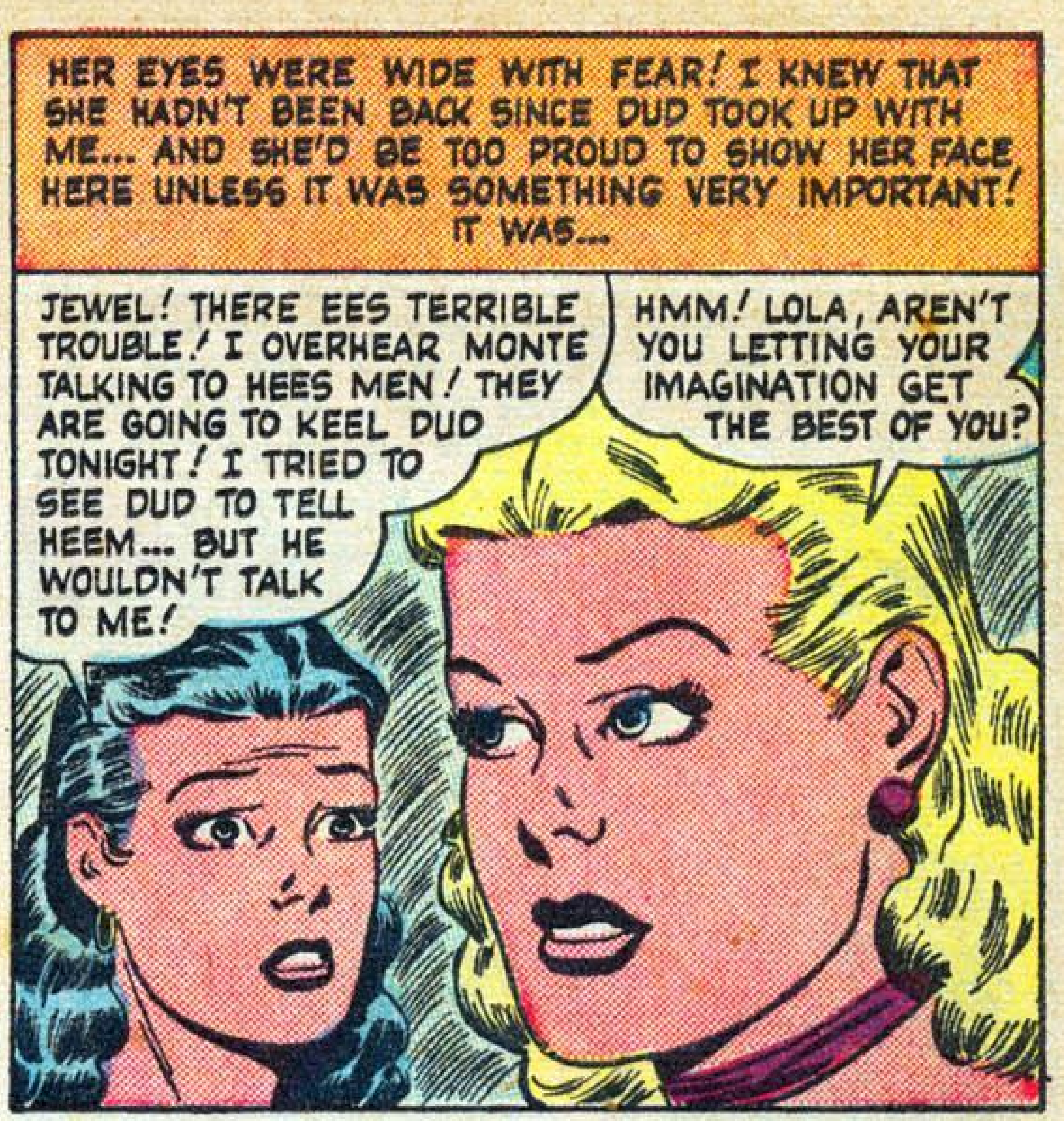

LOLA? WHO'S SHE? IT'S YOU I LOVE, DARLING!
OH... DUD!
HIS ARMS WERE STRONG, HIS KISS ARDENT! I KNEW THIS WASN'T LOVE, NOT REAL LOVE... ONLY INFATUATION WITH WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS GLAMOUR... AND I HAD NO LOVE FOR HIM... ONLY GREED! THAT, I ADMIT WAS THE ONLY EMOTION I WAS CAPABLE OF FEELING!

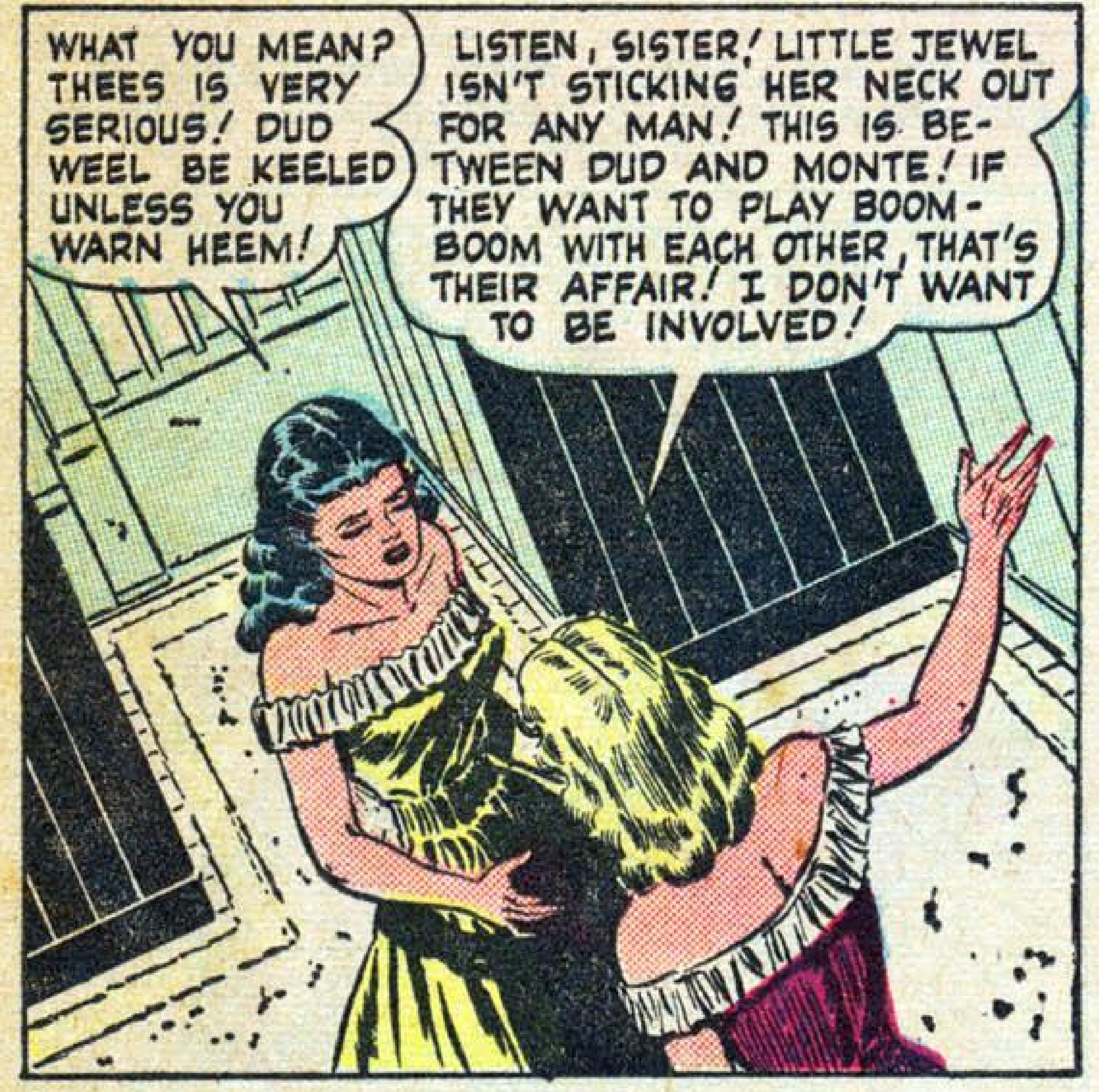

A FEW NIGHTS LATER I WAS AWAKENED BY A FURTIVE KNOCK ON MY DOOR, WHICH AWAKENED ME FROM MY DREAMS OF A RICH FUTURE! IT WAS LOLA! SHE HAD BEEN CRYING... AND HER VOICE STILL HAD AN UNHAPPY EDGE...
JEWEL, I COME TO PLEAD WITH YOU! SINCE YOU CAME, DUD HAS CHANGED TOWARD ME! HE DOES NOT LOVE ME ANY MORE... AND EET EES ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!
THAT'S TOO BAD... FOR YOU! BUT NICE FOR ME, EH? WHY DO YOU COME TO ME?

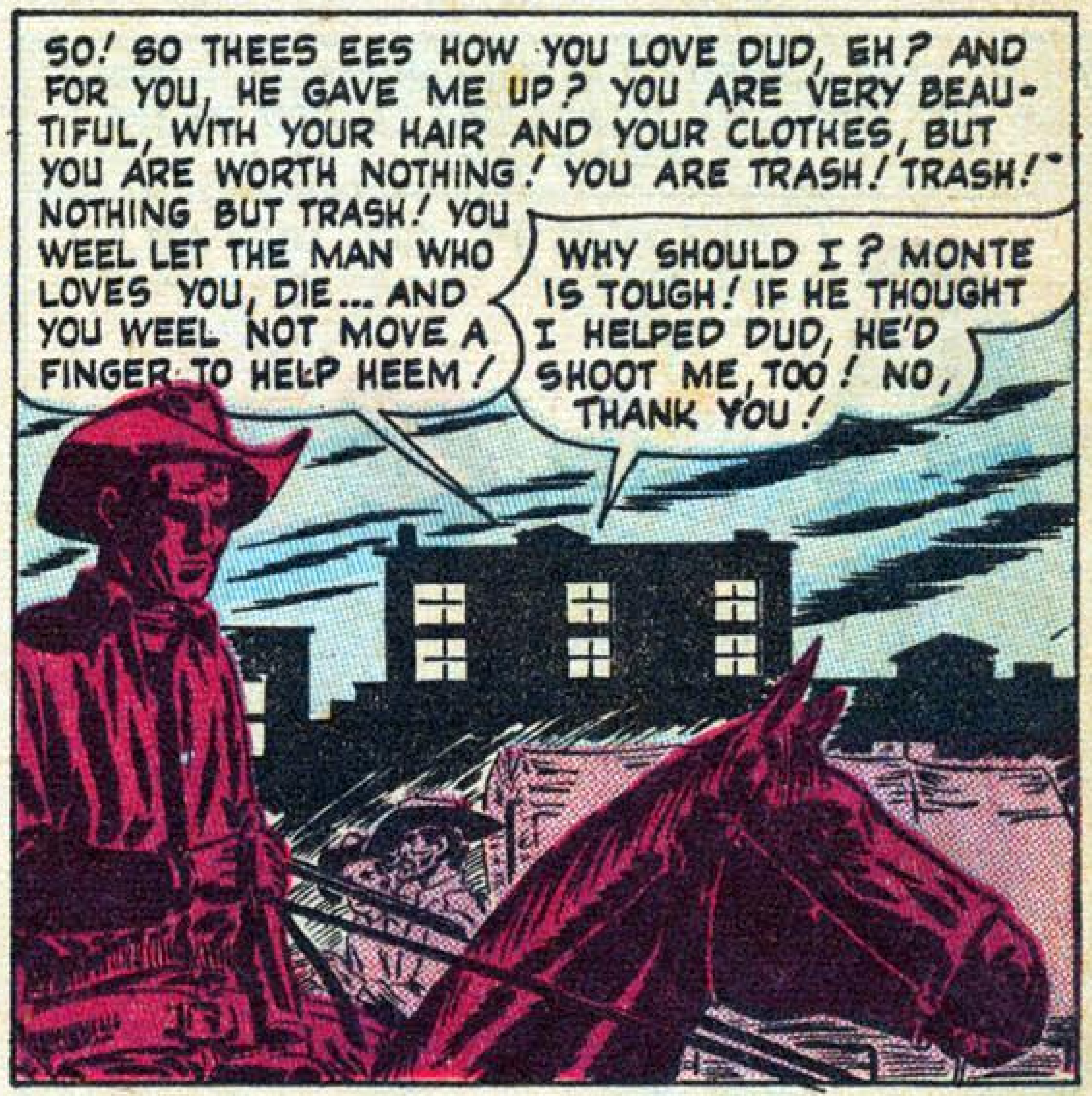

BECAUSE YOU DO NOT LOVE HEEM! I DO LOVE DUD... WITH ALL MY SOUL! I SHALL DIE WITHOUT HEEM! PLEASE! PLEASE! HE MEANS NOTHEENG TO YOU... YOU AND I KNOW THAT! AND YOU WEEL HURT HEEM... VERY MUCH, WHEN HE FINDS OUT! I BEG OF YOU... GO AWAY AND LET US BE HAPPY AS WE WERE BEFORE YOU CAME!
VERY TOUCHING, LOLA! BUT I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT THE WAY I PLANNED THINGS! YOU'RE TO GO AWAY-- LITTLE JEWEL IS STAYING! EXCUSE ME NOW-- I'VE GOT TO GET MY BEAUTY SLEEP! DUD DOESN'T LIKE ME TO LOOK TIRED!

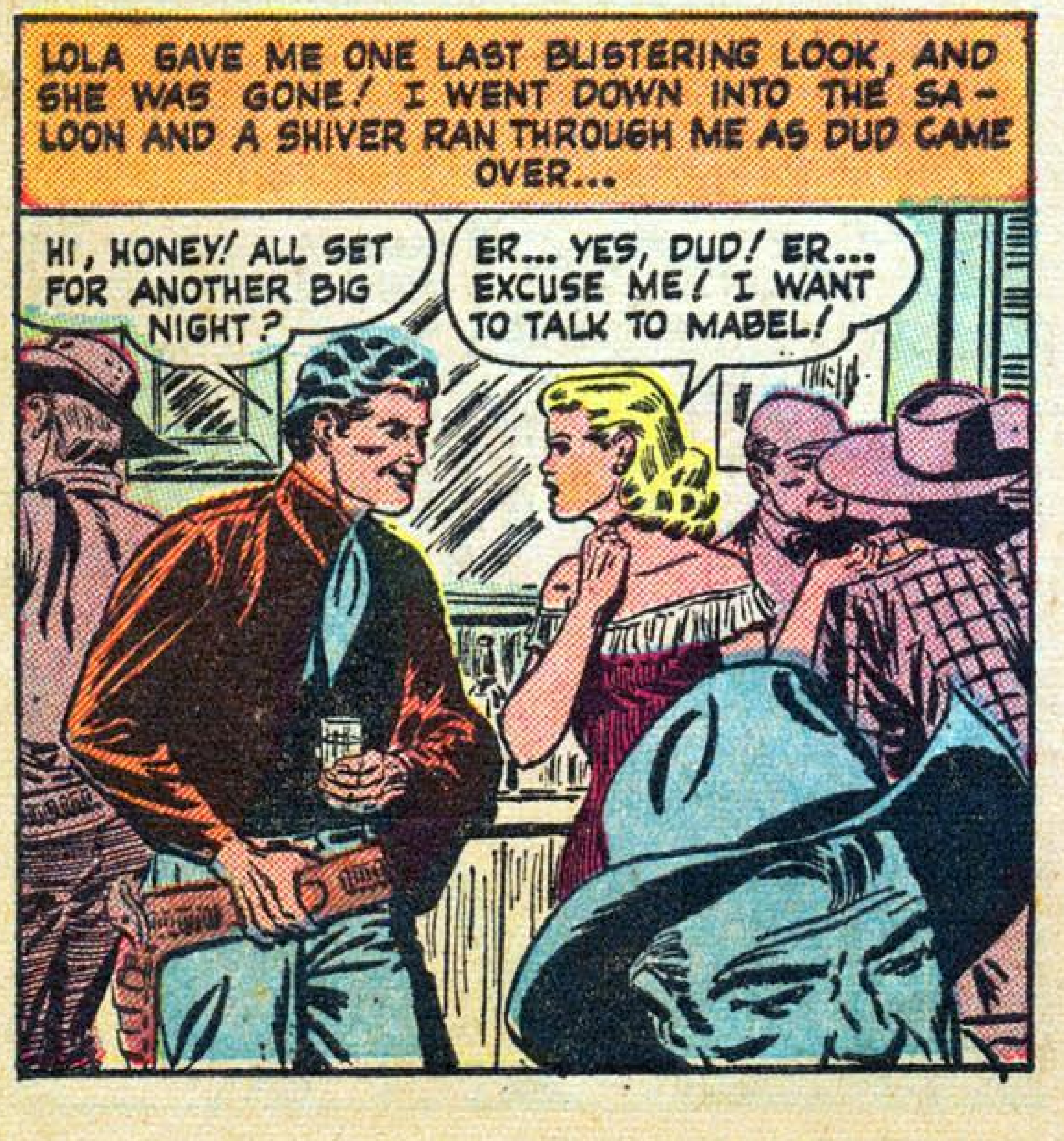

I GUESS I WAS HARD ON LOLA... BUT IT WAS HER OR ME! ANYWAY, SHE DIDN'T SHOW AROUND THE SILVER STAR ANY MORE! I WAS THE NEW QUEEN THERE, AND IN DUD'S HEART! BUSINESS PICKED UP PLENTY WITH ME AS THE STAR ATTRACTION...
QUITE A BIG BUSINESS YOU'RE DOING HERE, DUD! WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THE PLACE?
EH? OH, HELLO, MONTE! THE SILVER STAR ISN'T FOR SALE!
WHEN MONTE CASS MAKES A BID FOR A PLACE, HE USUALLY GETS IT!
LOOK, MONTE, YOU AND YOUR HIRED MUG GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE THERE'S TROUBLE! I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T SELL... ESPECIALLY TO YOU! YOU'D TURN IT INTO A CROOKED GAMBLING DIVE IF I LET YOU HAVE IT, AND YOU'D ROB EVERY POOR COWPOKE WHO COMES IN HERE!
ALL RIGHT, DUD! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT... THAT'S HOW IT'LL BE! YOU WANT TROUBLE, YOU'LL GET TROUBLE... BUT I'LL GET THE SILVER STAR!
AW, LET ME POKE HIM ONE, BOSS!
DUD'S EYES FLARED UP AT THE HENCHMAN'S WORDS! HIS FIST DESCRIBED AN ARC THAT LANDED ON THE HOOD'S JAW!
POKE AWAY, FAT BOY!
DUD! LOOK OUT!
BUT DUD WAS LIGHTNING FAST! BEFORE MONTE'S GUN HAD A CHANCE TO CLEAR LEATHER, DUD'S WAS OUT AND BLAZING!
THE NEXT TIME, MONTE, I'LL AIM AT YOUR HEART INSTEAD OF YOUR HAND! NOW GET OUT AND STAY OUT!
UGH! I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET!
AFTER THEY WERE GONE, I TURNED TO DUD!
WHEW! WHAT KIND OF A PLACE IS THIS, ANYWAY? FIGHTING... SHOOTING! IF I DIDN'T CARE FOR YOU SO MUCH, DUD, I'D MOVE ON OUT OF HERE!
GOSH! NO, JEWEL! I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, HONEY! IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN! ONLY DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T EVER LEAVE ME!
YEP! LITTLE JEWEL WAS DOING ALL RIGHT, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? I HAD DUD RIGHT WHERE I WANTED HIM! STILL... I WAS WORRIED...
HMMM! IF MONTE DOES BUY THIS PLACE, WHERE'LL THAT LEAVE LITTLE JEWEL, EH? STILL, MONTE WAS KIND OF GIVING ME THE EYE! PSHAW! WHAT AM I WORRIED ABOUT? I'LL HAVE HIM EATING OUT OF MY HAND, TOO! YEP -- HEADS, I WIN, TAILS, I WIN!
5

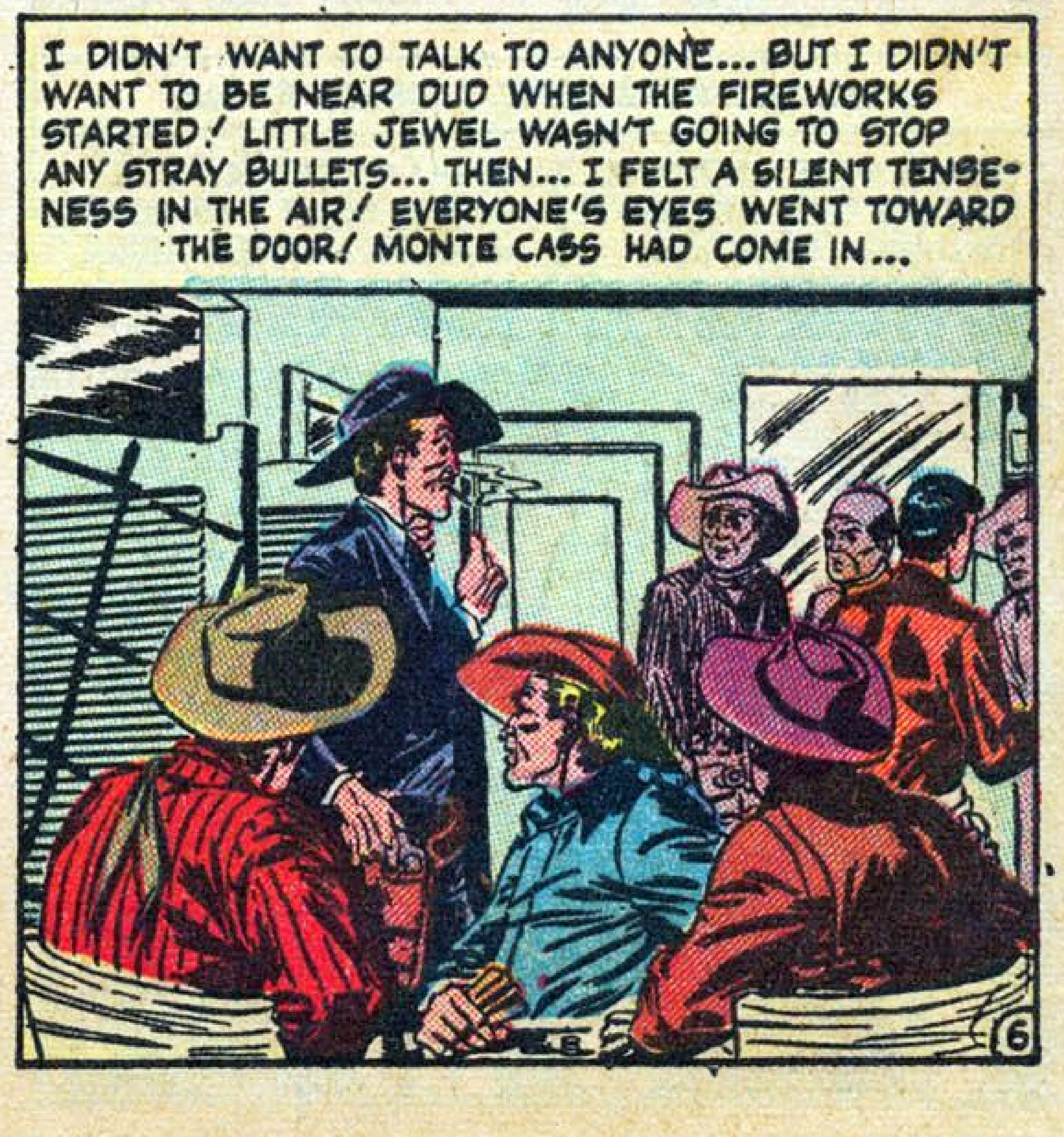

NOTHING COULD RUIN MY PLANS! I WAS SET! THE NEXT NIGHT I WAS LEAVING MY ROOM TO GO DOWN TO THE SALOON WHEN I SAW A FURTIVE FIGURE COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS...
JEWEL! I MUST SPEAK TO YOU!
WHO...? LOLA! FOR GOODNESS' SAKE! YOU GAVE ME THE SCARE OF MY LIFE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

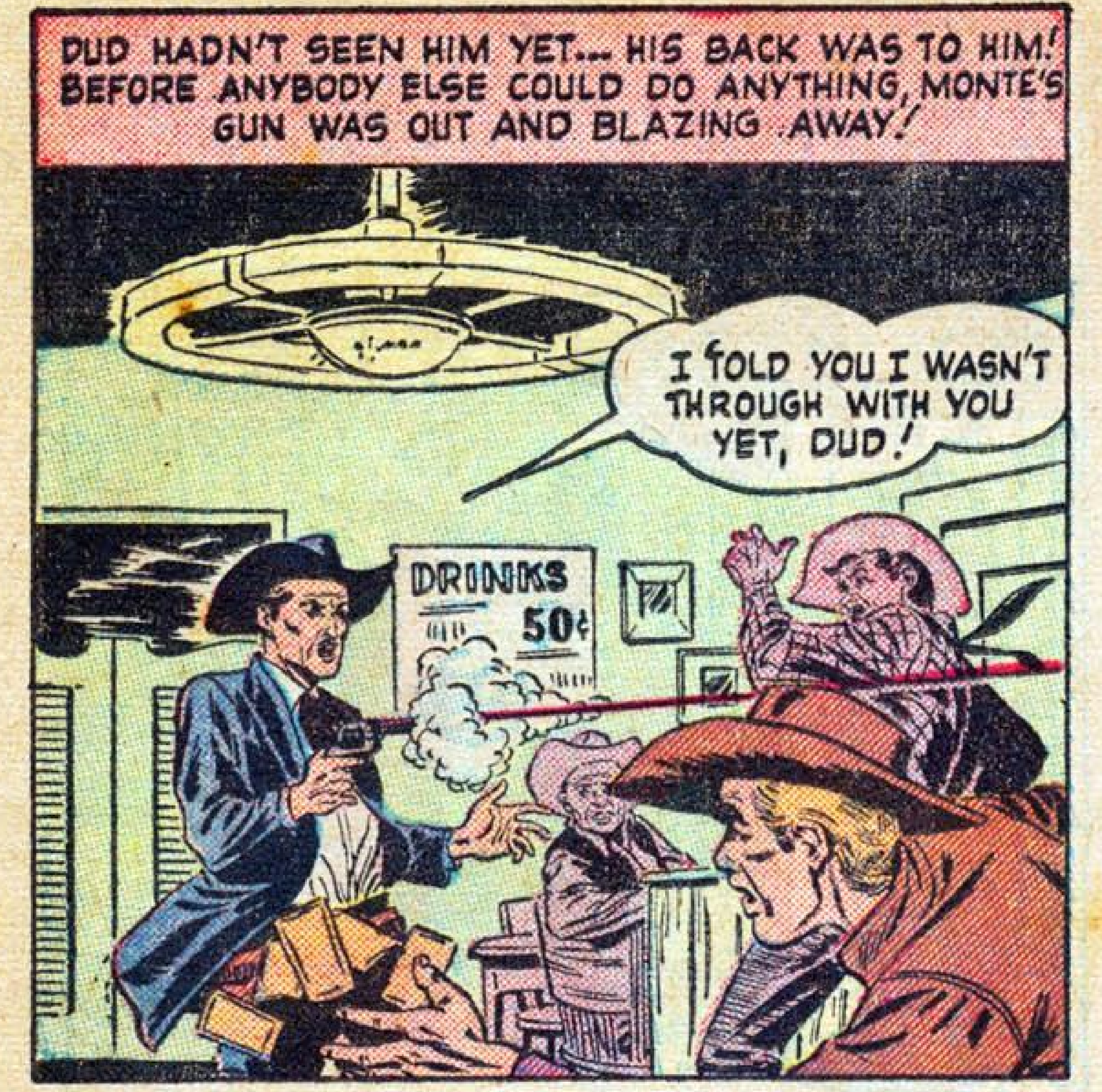

HER EYES WERE WIDE WITH FEAR! I KNEW THAT SHE HADN'T BEEN BACK SINCE DUD TOOK UP WITH ME... AND SHE'D BE TOO PROUD TO SHOW HER FACE HERE UNLESS IT WAS SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT! IT WAS...
JEWEL! THERE EES TERRIBLE TROUBLE! I OVERHEAR MONTE TALKING TO HEES MEN! THEY ARE GOING TO KEEL DUD TONIGHT! I TRIED TO SEE DUD TO TELL HEEM... BUT HE WOULDN'T TALK TO ME!
HMM! LOLA, AREN'T YOU LETTING YOUR IMAGINATION GET THE BEST OF YOU?

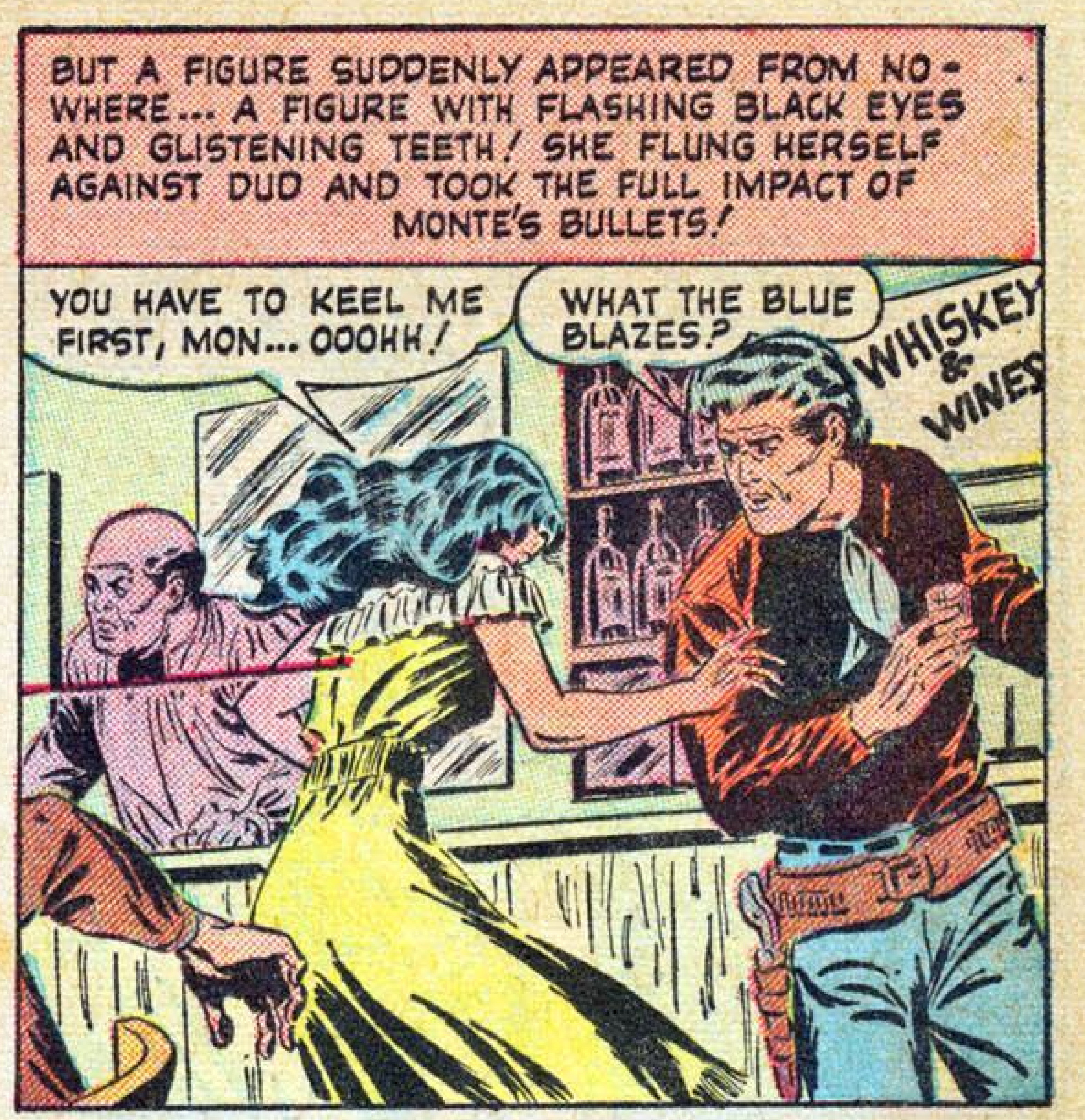

WHAT YOU MEAN? THEES IS VERY SERIOUS! DUD WEEL BE KEELED UNLESS YOU WARN HEEM!
LISTEN, SISTER! LITTLE JEWEL ISN'T STICKING HER NECK OUT FOR ANY MAN! THIS IS BETWEEN DUD AND MONTE! IF THEY WANT TO PLAY BOOM-BOOM WITH EACH OTHER, THAT'S THEIR AFFAIR! I DON'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED!

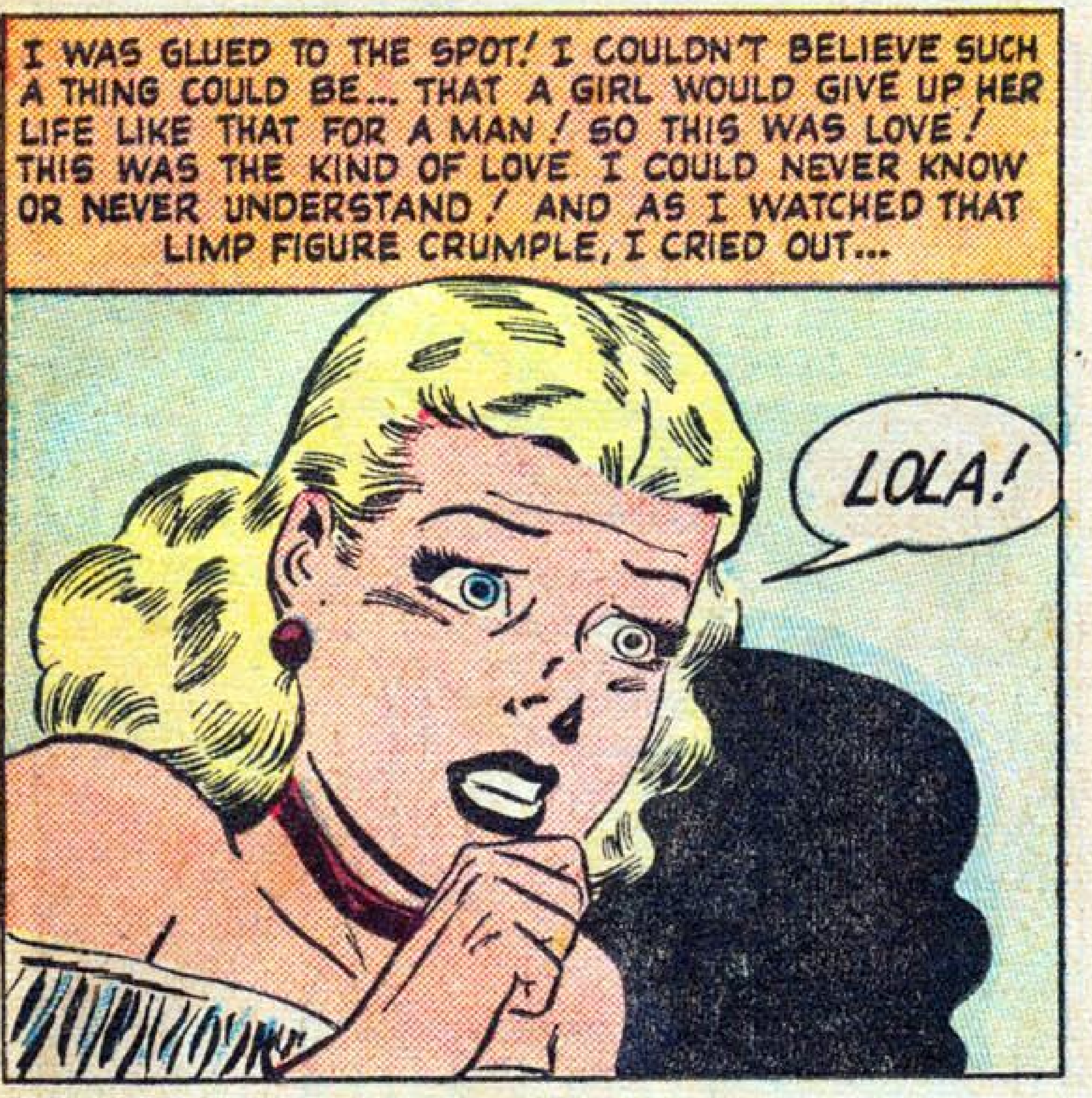

SO! SO THEES EES HOW YOU LOVE DUD, EH? AND FOR YOU, HE GAVE ME UP? YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL, WITH YOUR HAIR AND YOUR CLOTHES, BUT YOU ARE WORTH NOTHING! YOU ARE TRASH! TRASH! NOTHING BUT TRASH! YOU WEEL LET THE MAN WHO LOVES YOU, DIE... AND YOU WEEL NOT MOVE A FINGER TO HELP HEEM!
WHY SHOULD I? MONTE IS TOUGH! IF HE THOUGHT I HELPED DUD, HE'D SHOOT ME, TOO! NO, THANK YOU!

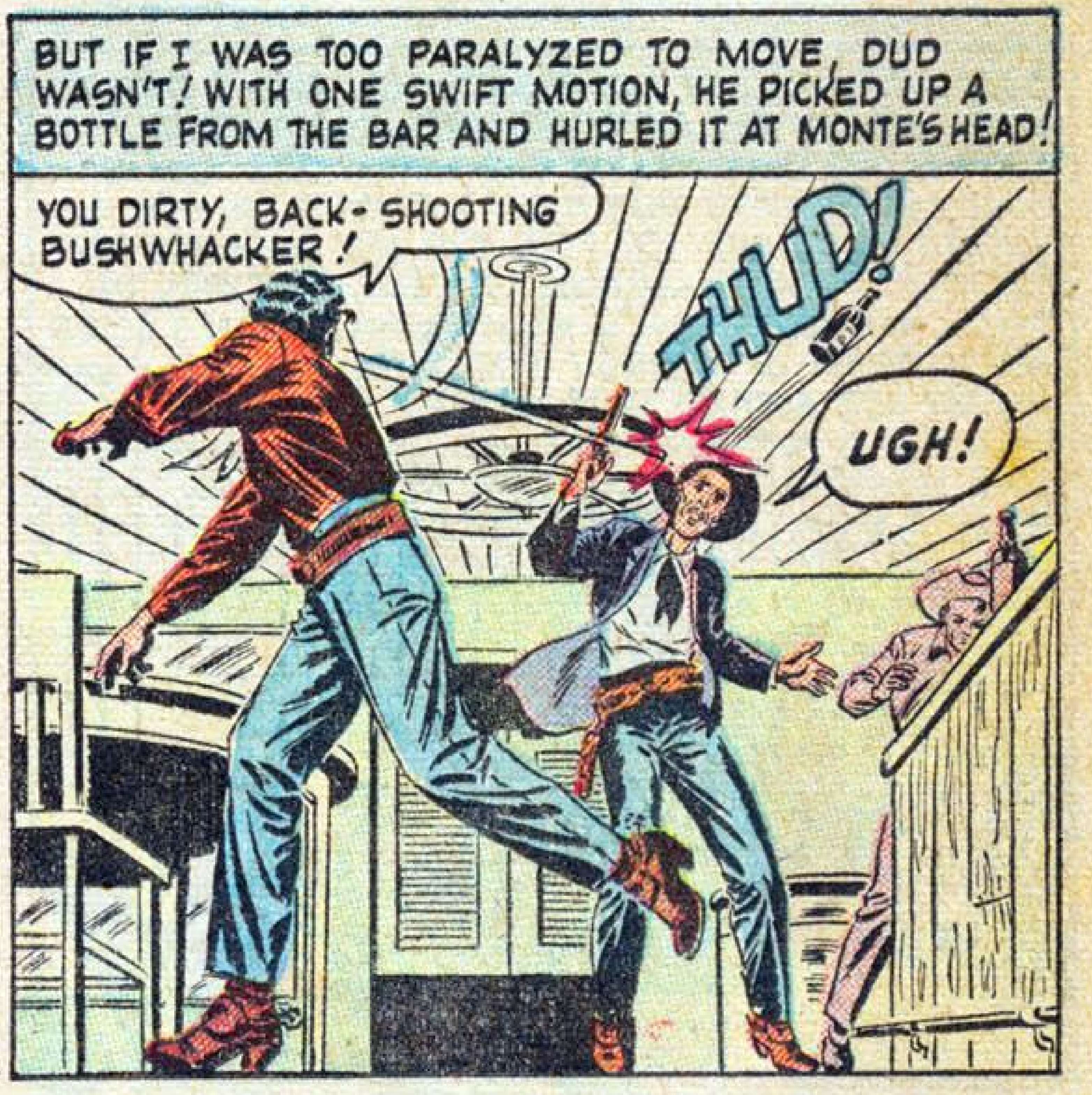

LOLA GAVE ME ONE LAST BLISTERING LOOK, AND SHE WAS GONE! I WENT DOWN INTO THE SALOON AND A SHIVER RAN THROUGH ME AS DUD CAME OVER...
HI, HONEY! ALL SET FOR ANOTHER BIG NIGHT?
ER... YES, DUD! ER... EXCUSE ME! I WANT TO TALK TO MABEL!

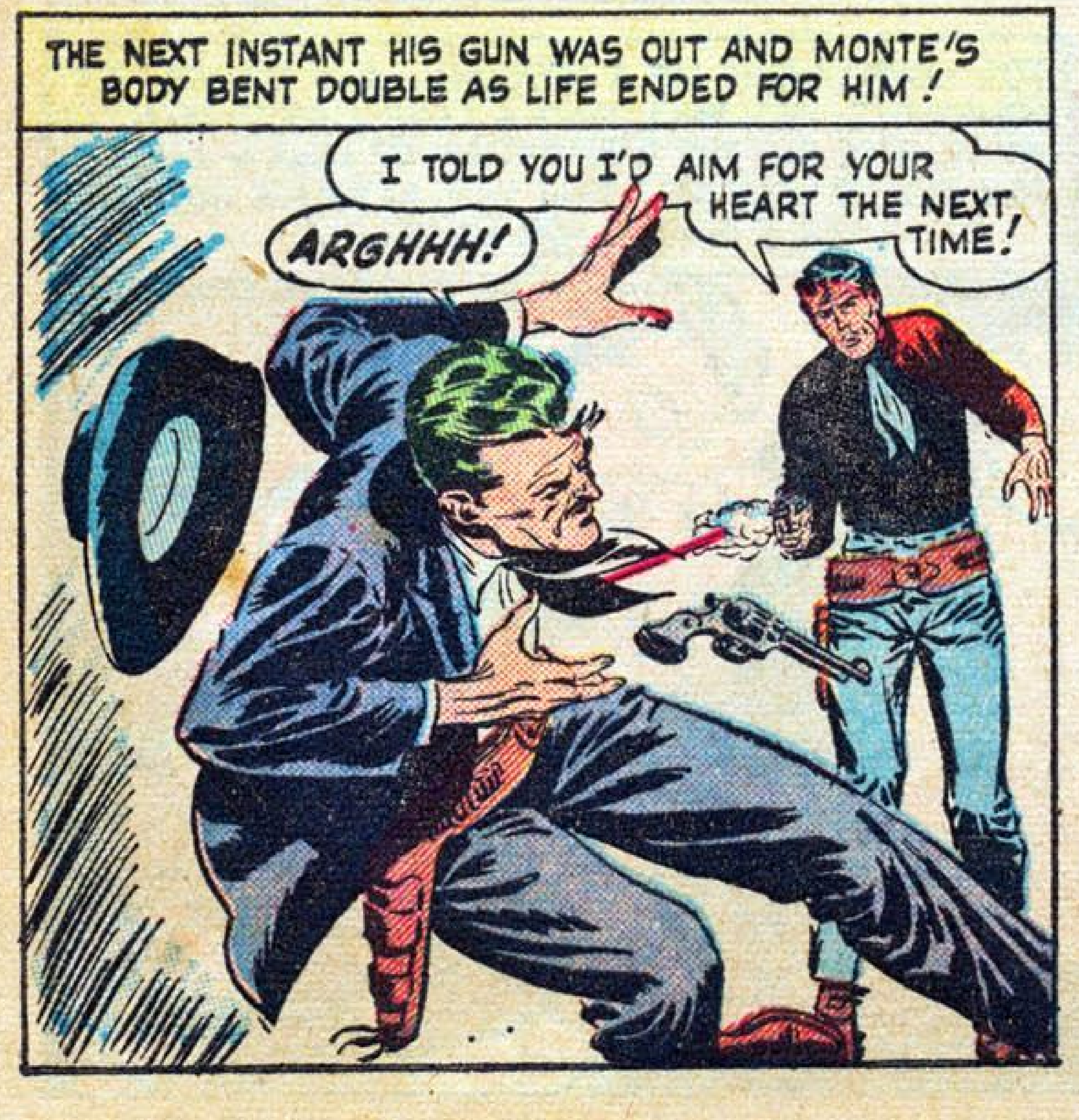

I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TO ANYONE... BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO BE NEAR DUD WHEN THE FIREWORKS STARTED! LITTLE JEWEL WASN'T GOING TO STOP ANY STRAY BULLETS... THEN... I FELT A SILENT TENSENESS IN THE AIR! EVERYONE'S EYES WENT TOWARD THE DOOR! MONTE CASS HAD COME IN...

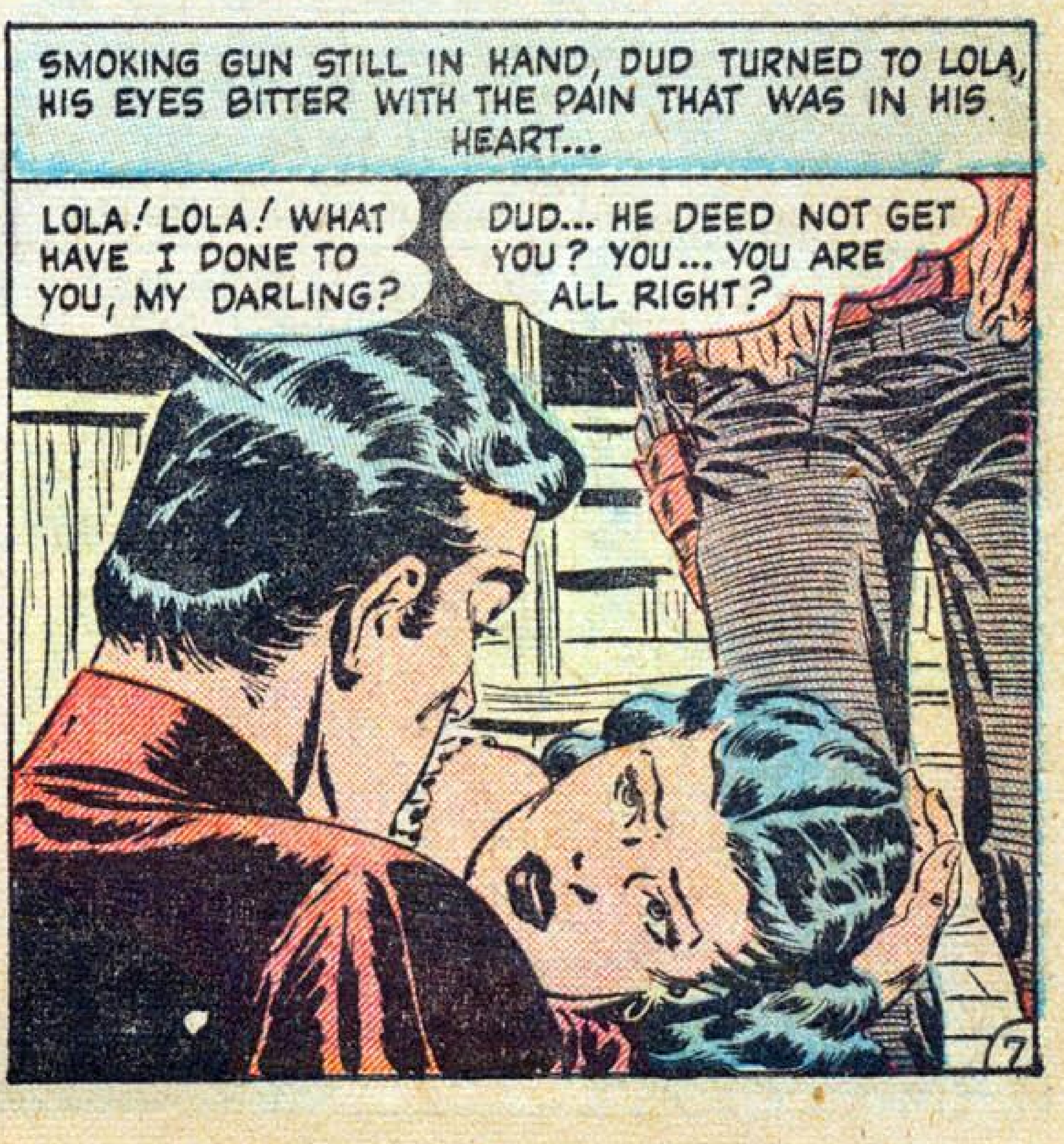

DUD HADN'T SEEN HIM YET... HIS BACK WAS TO HIM! BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE COULD DO ANYTHING, MONTE'S GUN WAS OUT AND BLAZING AWAY!
I TOLD YOU I WASN'T THROUGH WITH YOU YET, DUD!
DRINKS 50¢

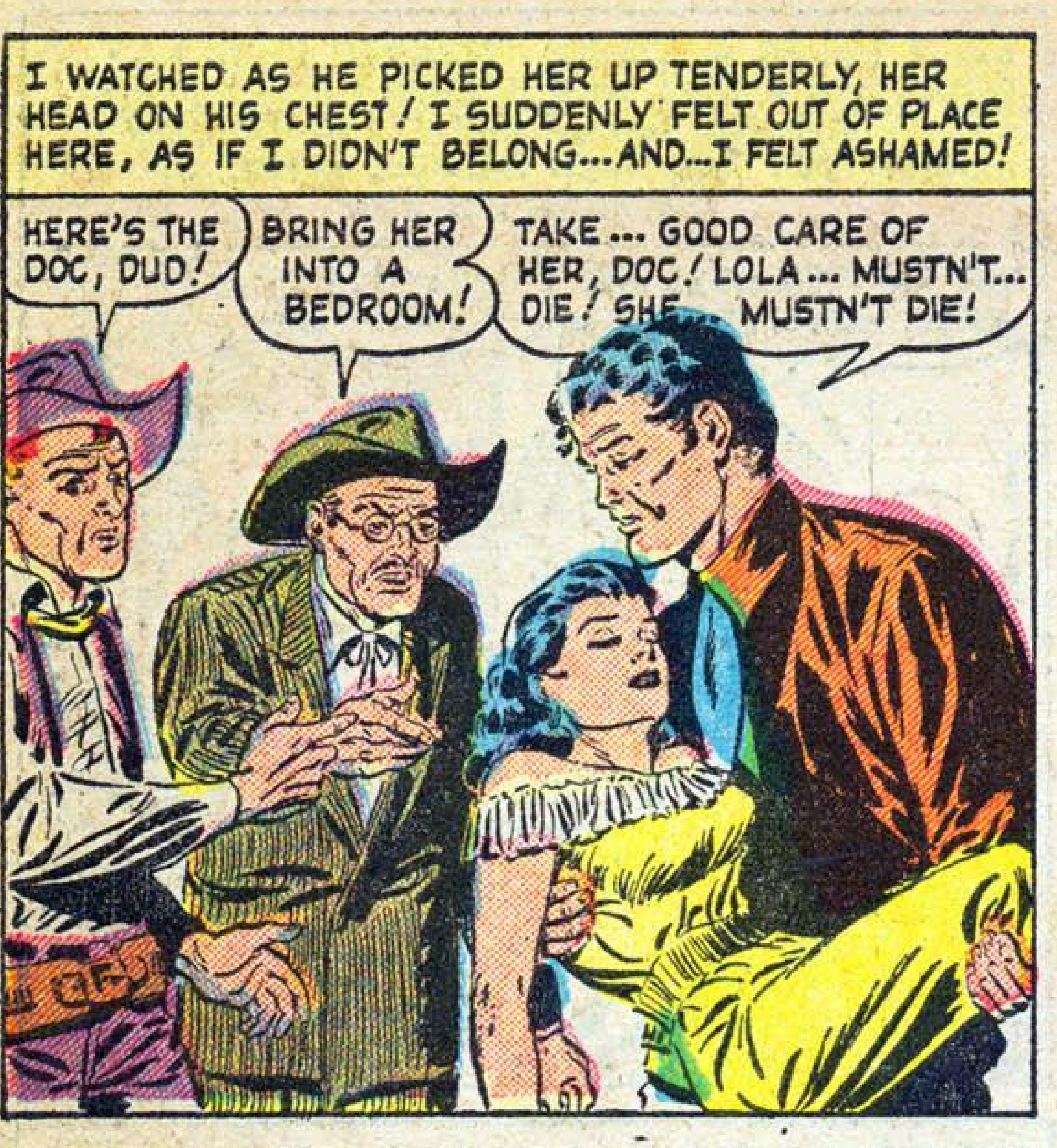

BUT A FIGURE SUDDENLY APPEARED FROM NO-WHERE... A FIGURE WITH FLASHING BLACK EYES AND GLISTENING TEETH! SHE FLUNG HERSELF AGAINST DUD AND TOOK THE FULL IMPACT OF MONTE'S BULLETS!
YOU HAVE TO KEEL ME FIRST, MON... OOOHH!
WHAT THE BLUE BLAZES?
WHISKEY & WINES

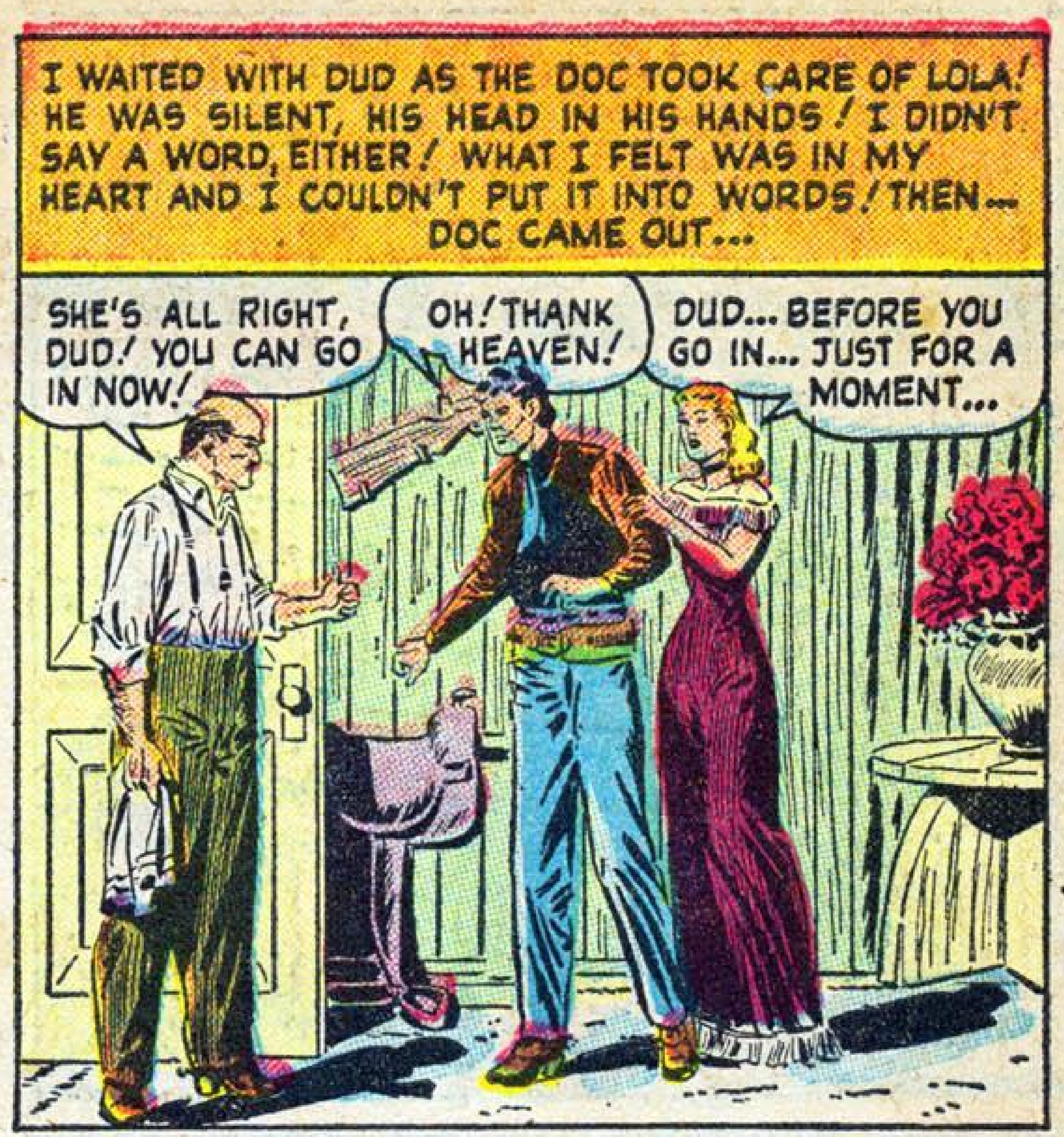

I WAS GLUED TO THE SPOT! I COULDN'T BELIEVE SUCH A THING COULD BE... THAT A GIRL WOULD GIVE UP HER LIFE LIKE THAT FOR A MAN! SO THIS WAS LOVE! THIS WAS THE KIND OF LOVE I COULD NEVER KNOW OR NEVER UNDERSTAND! AND AS I WATCHED THAT LIMP FIGURE CRUMPLE, I CRIED OUT...
LOLA!

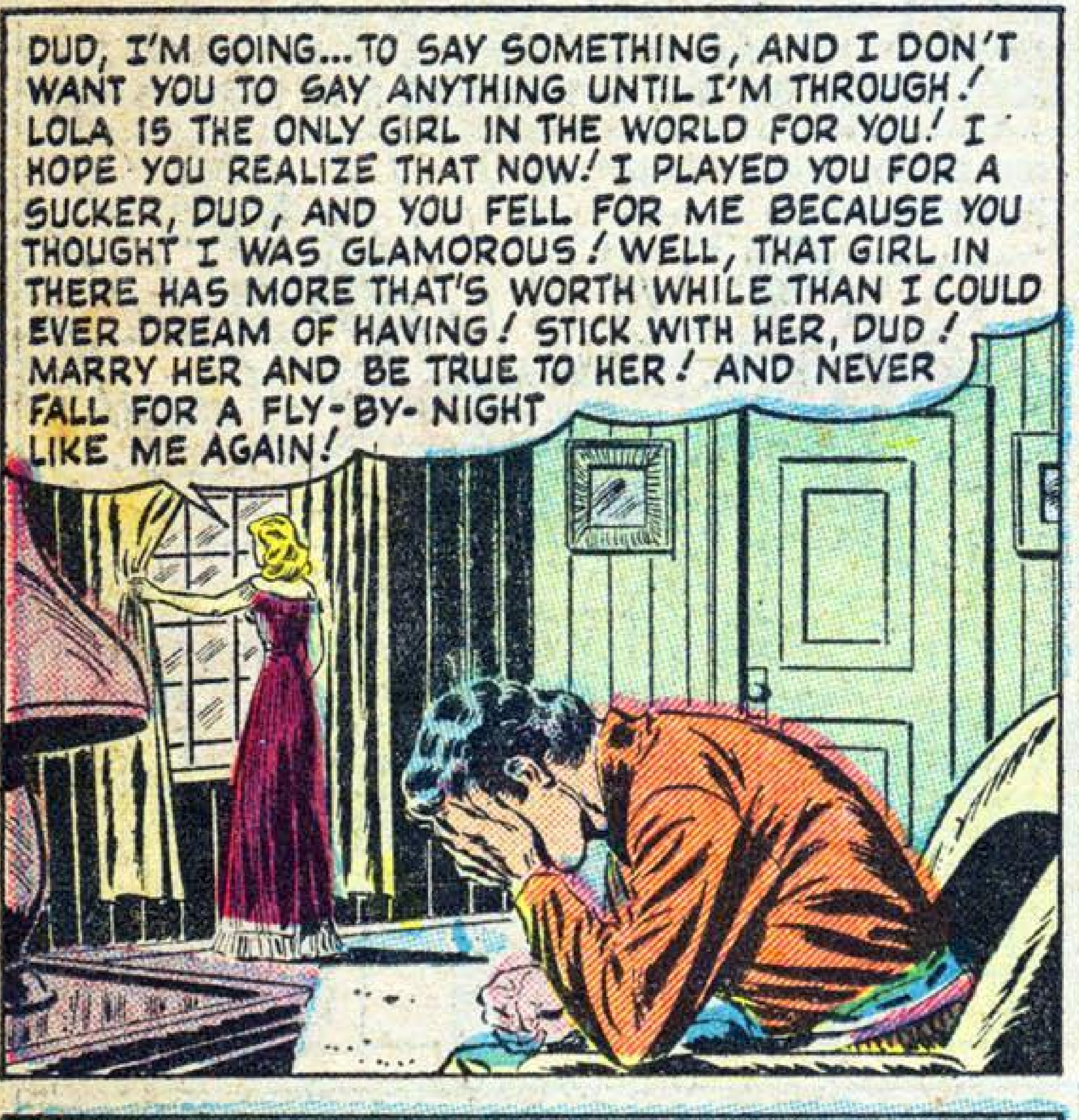

BUT IF I WAS TOO PARALYZED TO MOVE, DUD WASN'T! WITH ONE SWIFT MOTION, HE PICKED UP A BOTTLE FROM THE BAR AND HURLED IT AT MONTE'S HEAD!
YOU DIRTY, BACK-SHOOTING BUSHWHACKER!
THUD!
UGH!

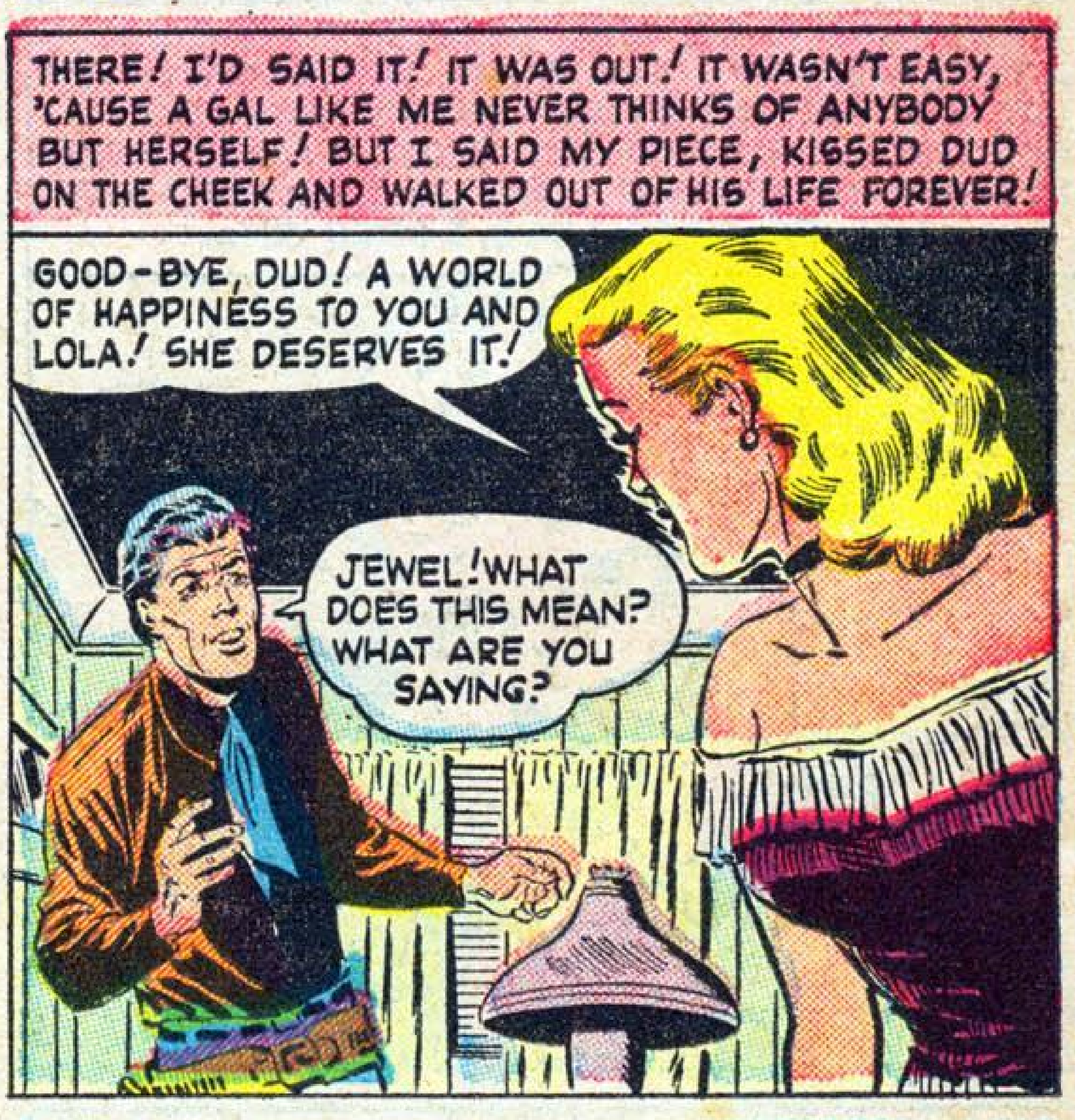

THE NEXT INSTANT HIS GUN WAS OUT AND MONTE'S BODY BENT DOUBLE AS LIFE ENDED FOR HIM!
I TOLD YOU I'D AIM FOR YOUR HEART THE NEXT TIME!
ARGHHH!

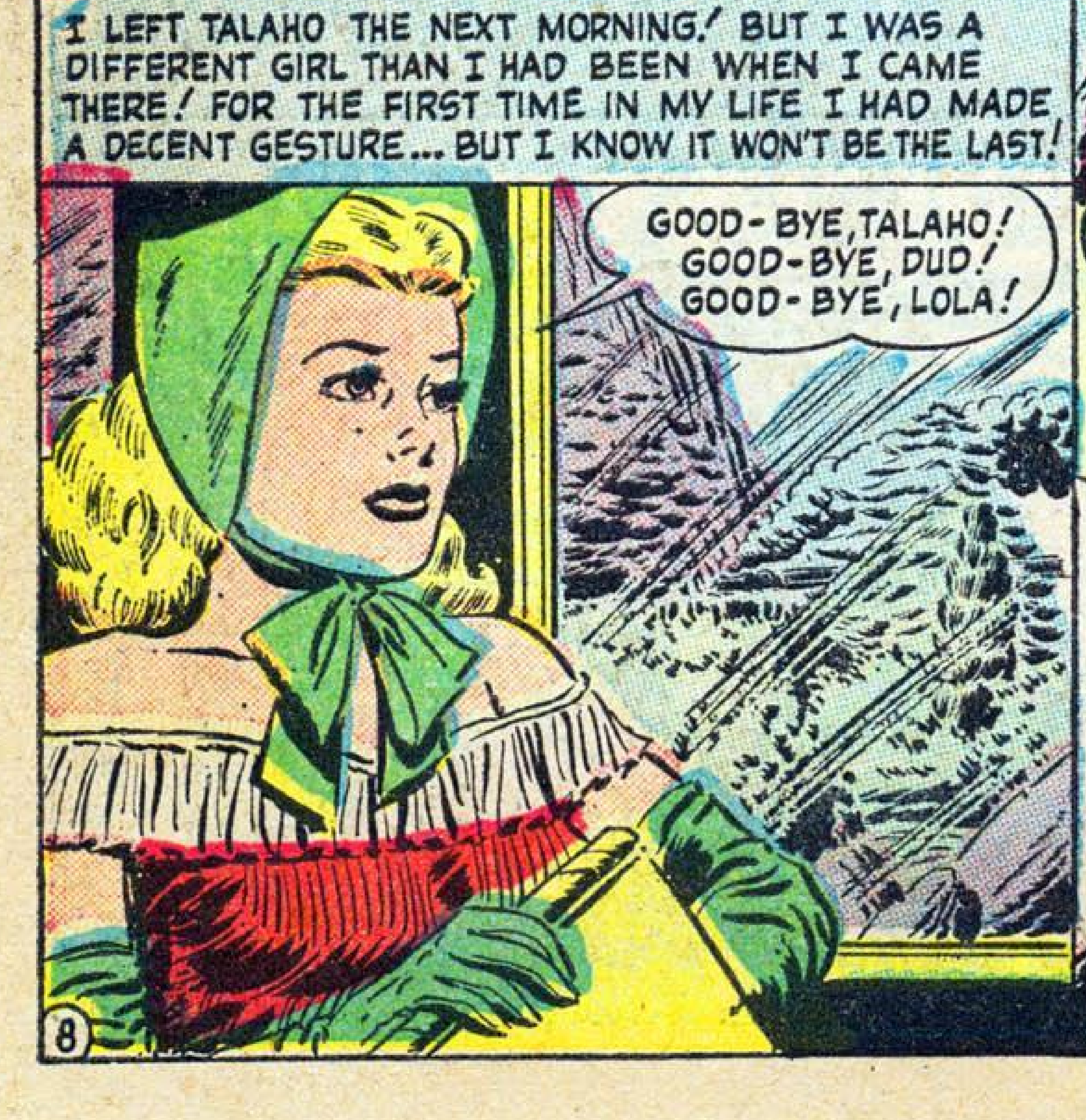

SMOKING GUN STILL IN HAND, DUD TURNED TO LOLA, HIS EYES BITTER WITH THE PAIN THAT WAS IN HIS HEART...
LOLA! LOLA! WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU, MY DARLING?
DUD... HE DEED NOT GET YOU? YOU... YOU ARE ALL RIGHT?

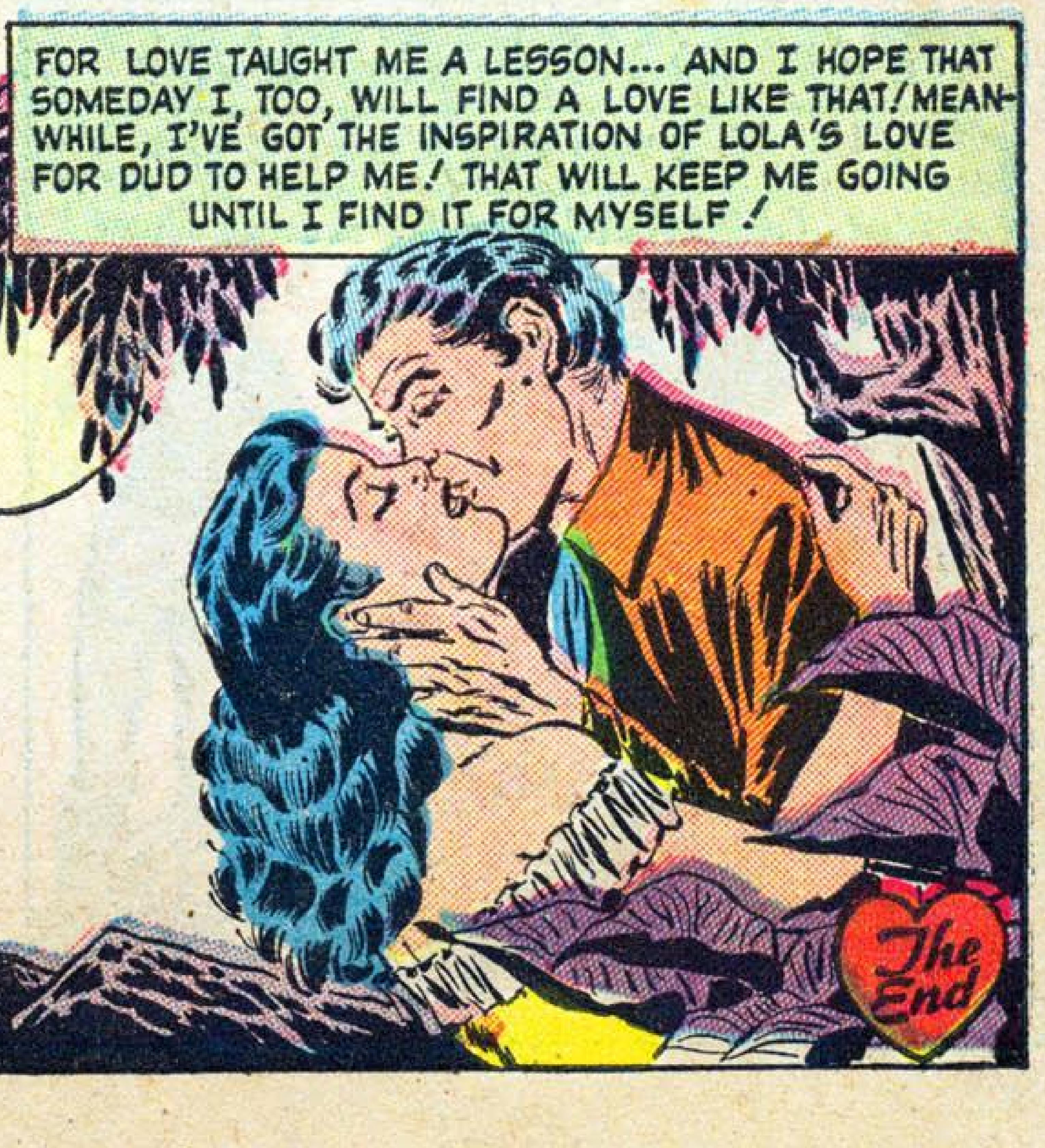

I WATCHED AS HE PICKED HER UP TENDERLY, HER HEAD ON HIS CHEST! I SUDDENLY FELT OUT OF PLACE HERE, AS IF I DIDN'T BELONG... AND... I FELT ASHAMED!
HERE'S THE DOC, DUD!
BRING HER INTO A BEDROOM!
TAKE... GOOD CARE OF HER, DOC! LOLA... MUSTN'T... DIE! SHE... MUSTN'T DIE!

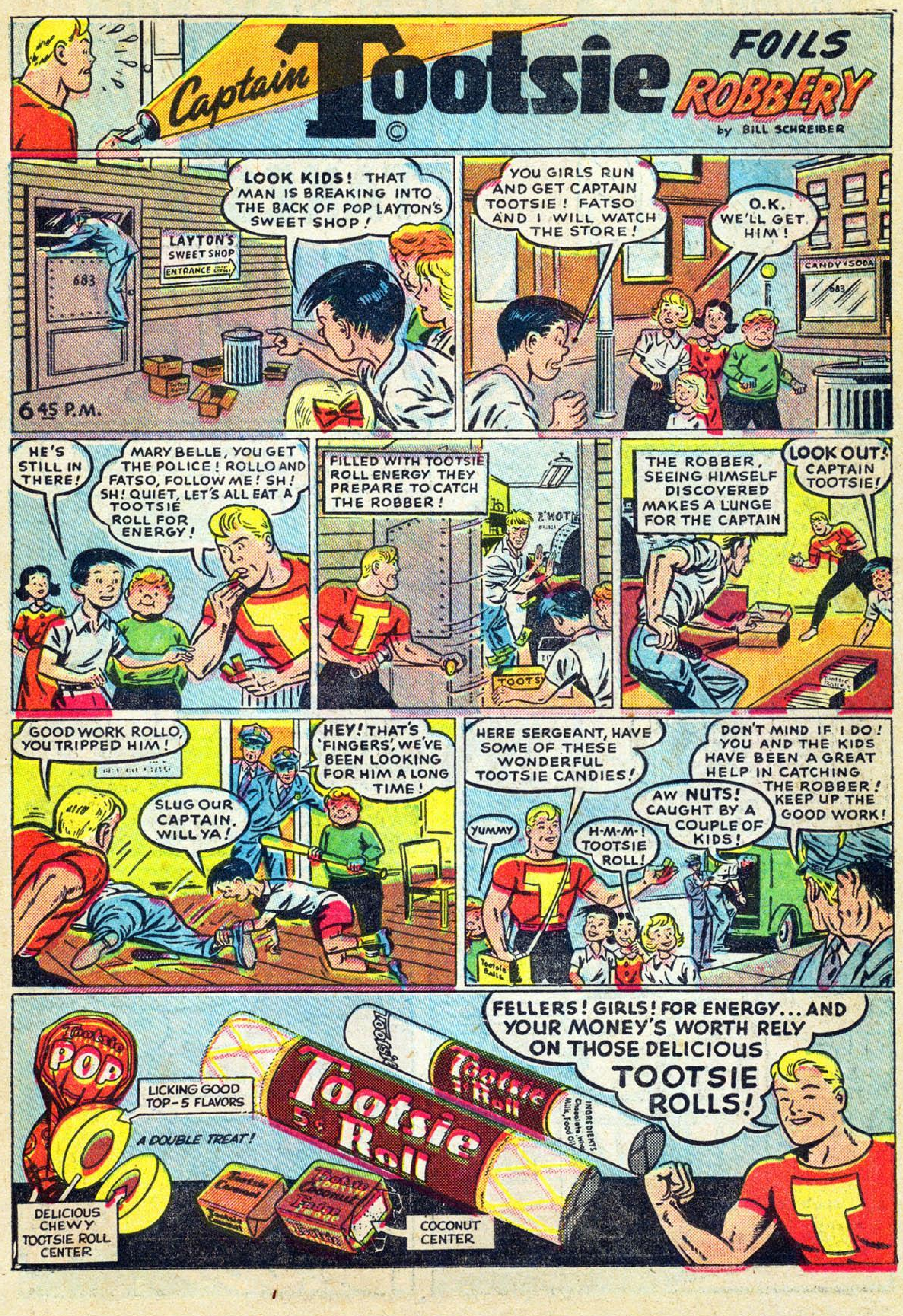

I WAITED WITH DUD AS THE DOC TOOK CARE OF LOLA! HE WAS SILENT, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS! I DIDN'T SAY A WORD, EITHER! WHAT I FELT WAS IN MY HEART AND I COULDN'T PUT IT INTO WORDS! THEN... DOC CAME OUT...
SHE'S ALL RIGHT, DUD! YOU CAN GO IN NOW!
OH! THANK HEAVEN!
DUD... BEFORE YOU GO IN... JUST FOR A MOMENT...


DUD, I'M GOING... TO SAY SOMETHING, AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO SAY ANYTHING UNTIL I'M THROUGH! LOLA IS THE ONLY GIRL IN THE WORLD FOR YOU! I HOPE YOU REALIZE THAT NOW! I PLAYED YOU FOR A SUCKER, DUD, AND YOU FELL FOR ME BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT I WAS GLAMOROUS! WELL, THAT GIRL IN THERE HAS MORE THAT'S WORTH WHILE THAN I COULD EVER DREAM OF HAVING! STICK WITH HER, DUD! MARRY HER AND BE TRUE TO HER! AND NEVER FALL FOR A FLY-BY-NIGHT LIKE ME AGAIN!


THERE! I'D SAID IT! IT WAS OUT! IT WASN'T EASY, 'CAUSE A GAL LIKE ME NEVER THINKS OF ANYBODY BUT HERSELF! BUT I SAID MY PIECE, KISSED DUD ON THE CHEEK AND WALKED OUT OF HIS LIFE FOREVER!
GOOD-BYE, DUD! A WORLD OF HAPPINESS TO YOU AND LOLA! SHE DESERVES IT!
JEWEL! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

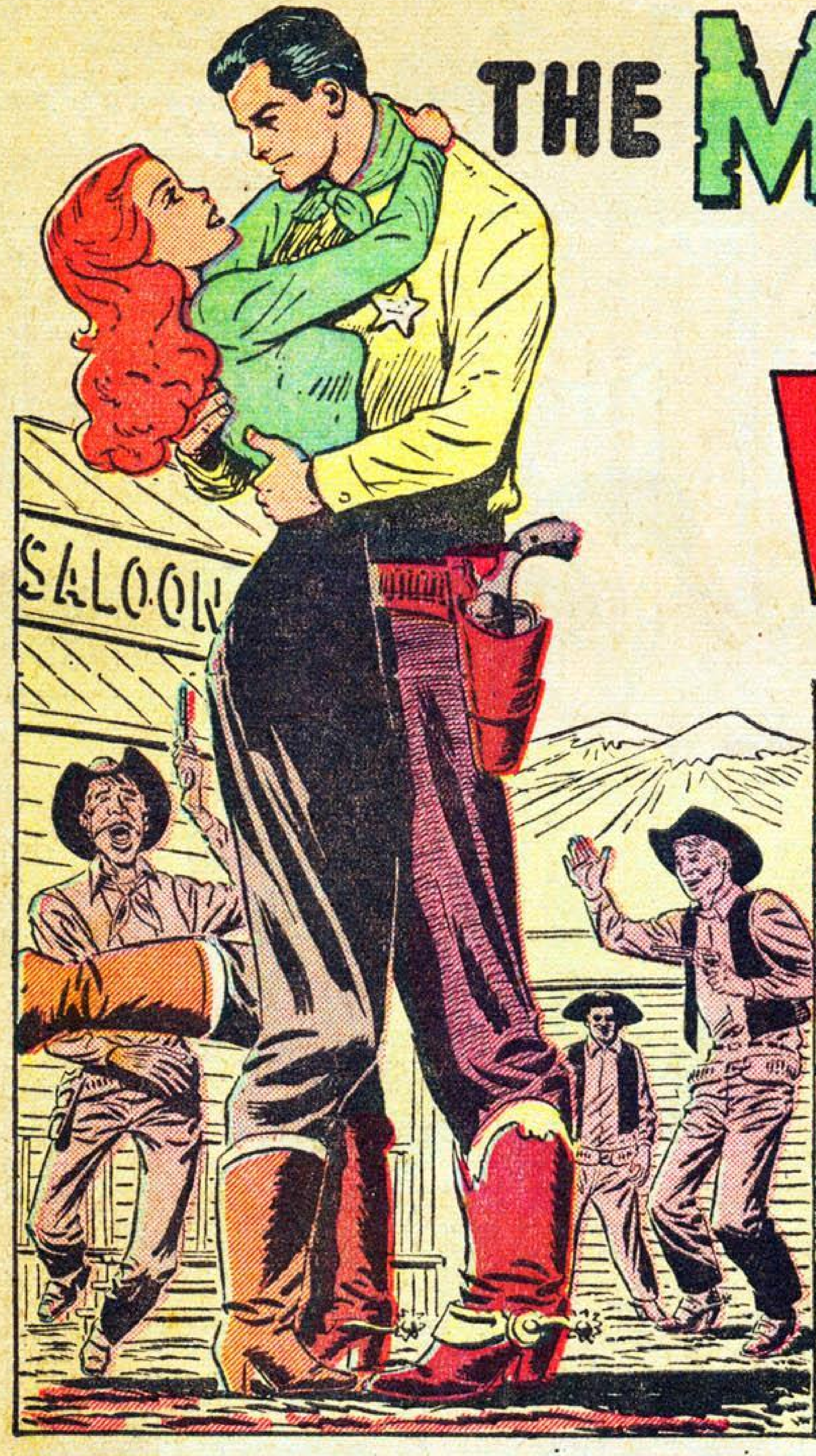

I LEFT TALAHO THE NEXT MORNING! BUT I WAS A DIFFERENT GIRL THAN I HAD BEEN WHEN I CAME THERE! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I HAD MADE A DECENT GESTURE... BUT I KNOW IT WON'T BE THE LAST!
GOOD-BYE, TALAHO! GOOD-BYE, DUD! GOOD-BYE, LOLA!

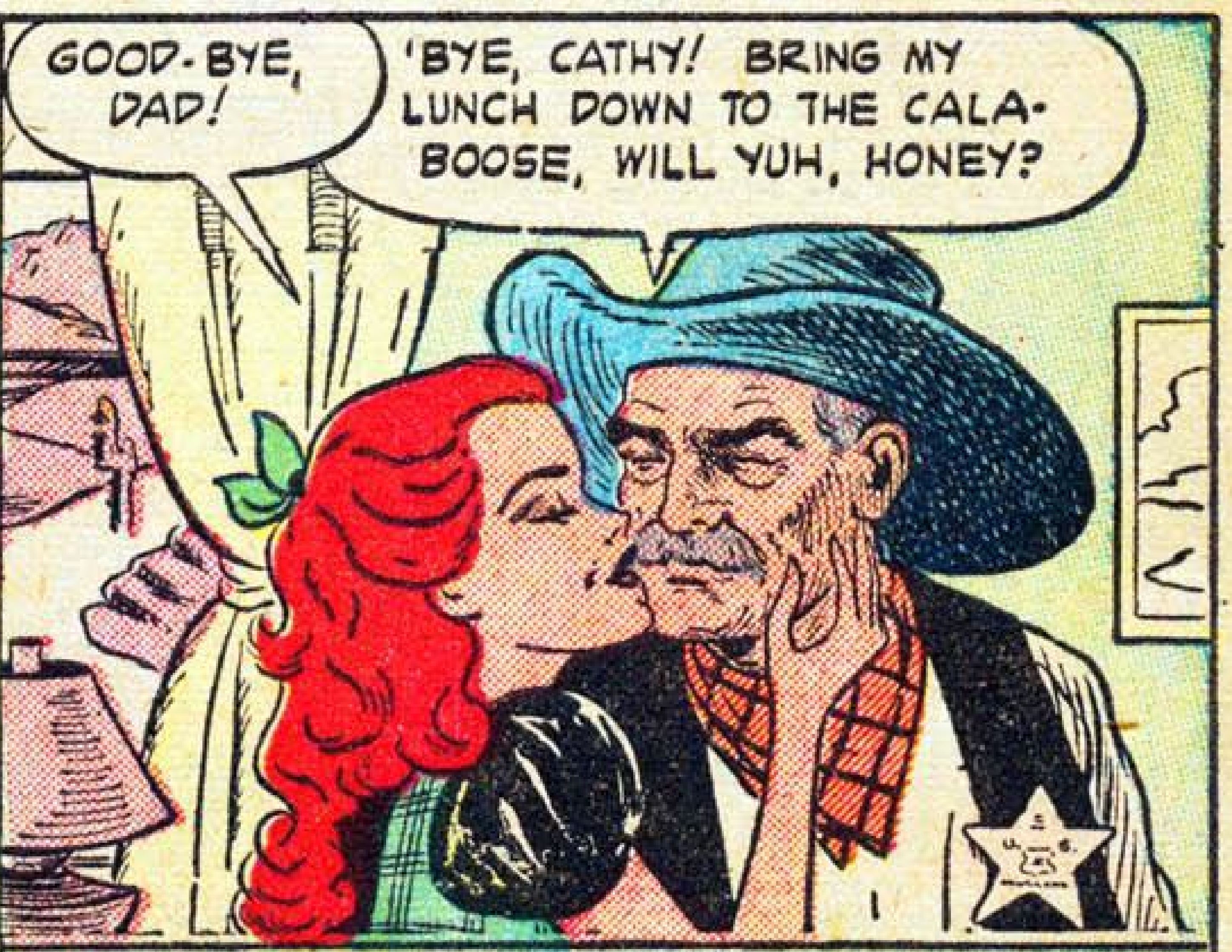

FOR LOVE TAUGHT ME A LESSON... AND I HOPE THAT SOMEDAY I, TOO, WILL FIND A LOVE LIKE THAT! MEANWHILE, I'VE GOT THE INSPIRATION OF LOLA'S LOVE FOR DUD TO HELP ME! THAT WILL KEEP ME GOING UNTIL I FIND IT FOR MYSELF!
The End


Captain Tootsie ©
FOILS ROBBERY
by BILL SCHREIBER
LOOK KIDS! THAT MAN IS BREAKING INTO THE BACK OF POP LAYTON'S SWEET SHOP!
LAYTON'S SWEET SHOP
ENTRANCE
683
6:45 P.M.
YOU GIRLS RUN AND GET CAPTAIN TOOTSIE! FATSO AND I WILL WATCH THE STORE!
O.K. WE'LL GET HIM!
CANDY • SODA
683
HE'S STILL IN THERE!
MARY BELLE, YOU GET THE POLICE! ROLLO AND FATSO, FOLLOW ME! SH! SH! QUIET, LET'S ALL EAT A TOOTSIE ROLL FOR ENERGY!
FILLED WITH TOOTSIE ROLL ENERGY THEY PREPARE TO CATCH THE ROBBER!
TOOTS
THE ROBBER, SEEING HIMSELF DISCOVERED MAKES A LUNGE FOR THE CAPTAIN
LOOK OUT! CAPTAIN TOOTSIE!
GOOD WORK ROLLO, YOU TRIPPED HIM!
HEY! THAT'S 'FINGERS', WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM A LONG TIME!
SLUG OUR CAPTAIN, WILL YA!
HERE SERGEANT, HAVE SOME OF THESE WONDERFUL TOOTSIE CANDIES!
DON'T MIND IF I DO! YOU AND THE KIDS HAVE BEEN A GREAT HELP IN CATCHING THE ROBBER! KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!
YUMMY
H-M-M-! TOOTSIE ROLL!
AW NUTS! CAUGHT BY A COUPLE OF KIDS!
Tootsie Rolls
FELLERS! GIRLS! FOR ENERGY... AND YOUR MONEY'S WORTH RELY ON THOSE DELICIOUS TOOTSIE ROLLS!
Tootsie POP
LICKING GOOD TOP-5 FLAVORS
A DOUBLE TREAT!
DELICIOUS CHEWY TOOTSIE ROLL CENTER
Tootsie 5¢ Roll
Tootsie Roll
INGREDIENTS Chocolate, Milk, Food Oil
Tootsie Caramel
Tootsie Coconut Fudge
COCONUT CENTER

I WAS SOON TO LEARN THAT VERY OFTEN HUMAN LIVES CAN BE AT STAKE WHEN THE MARSHAL TAKES A WIFE!

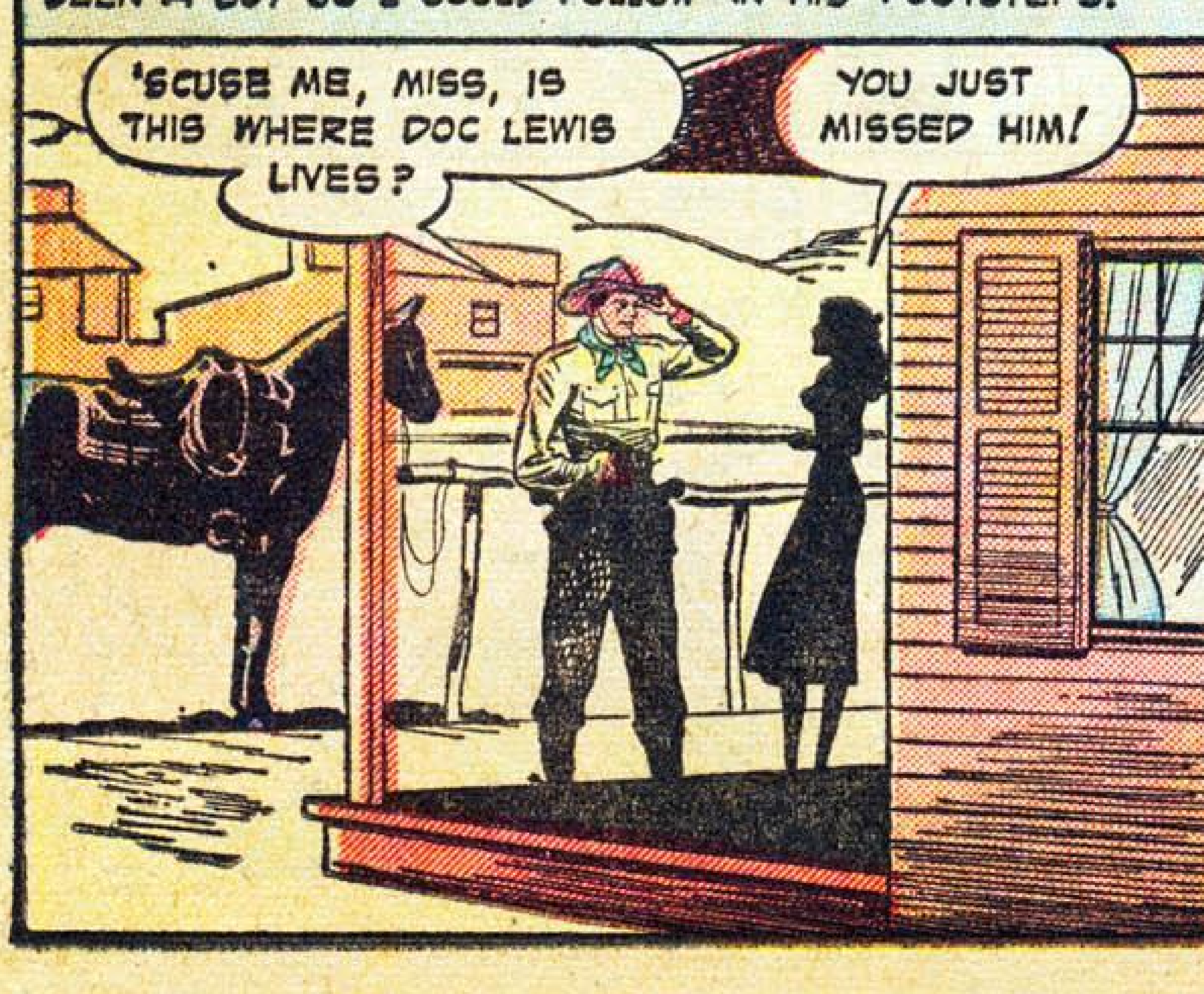
6950

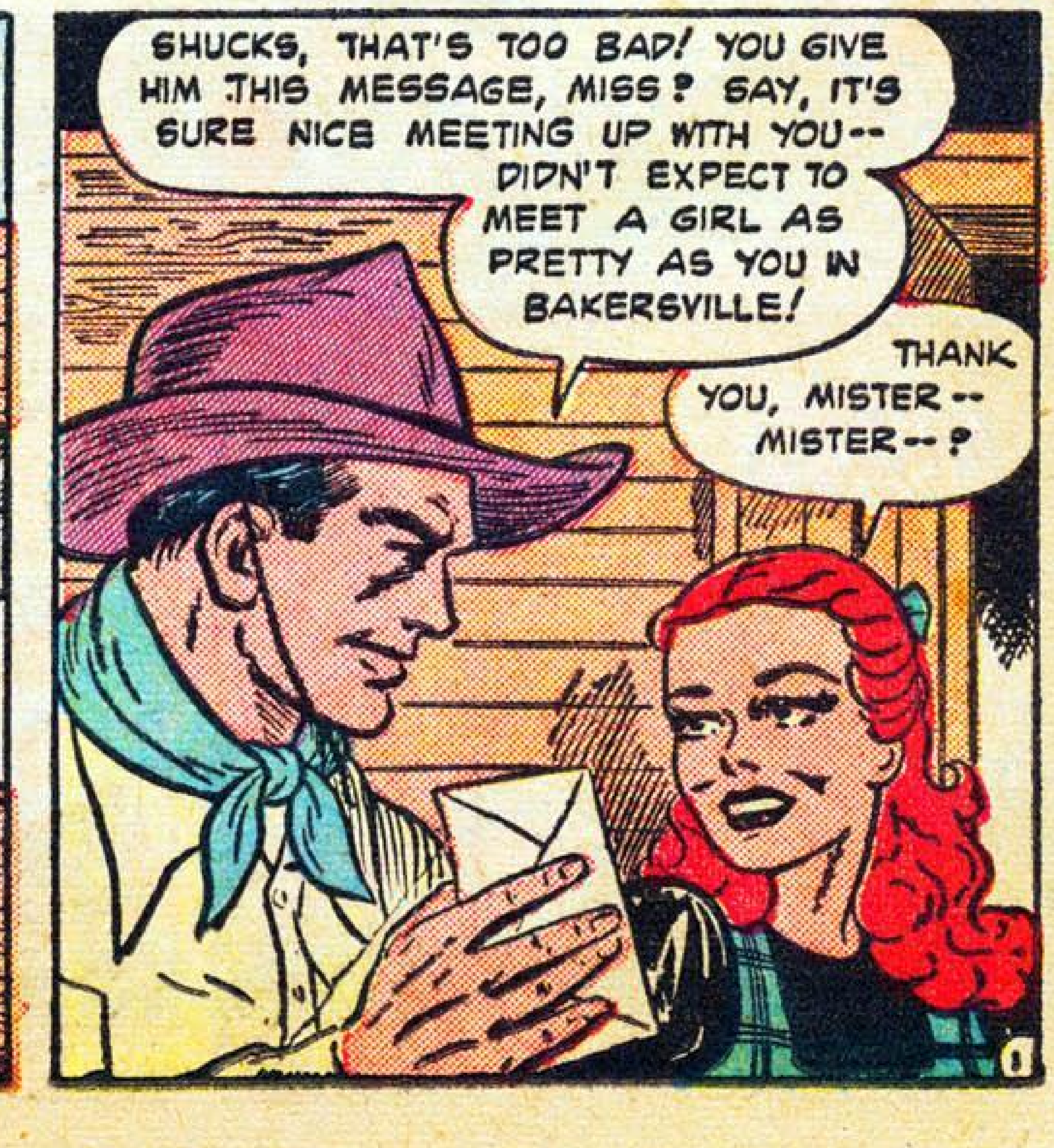


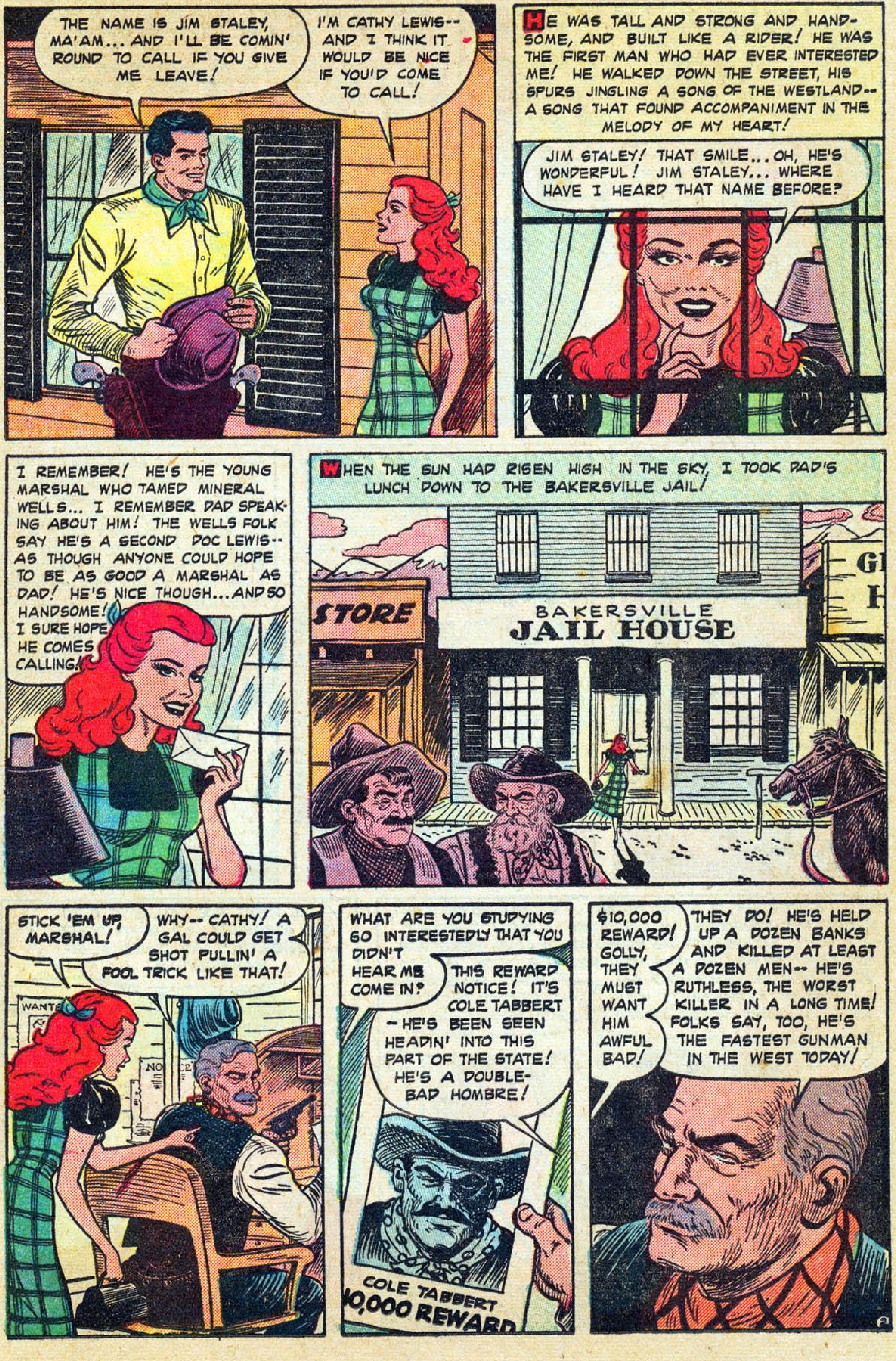

GOOD-BYE, DAD!
'BYE, CATHY! BRING MY LUNCH DOWN TO THE CALABOOSE, WILL YUH, HONEY?

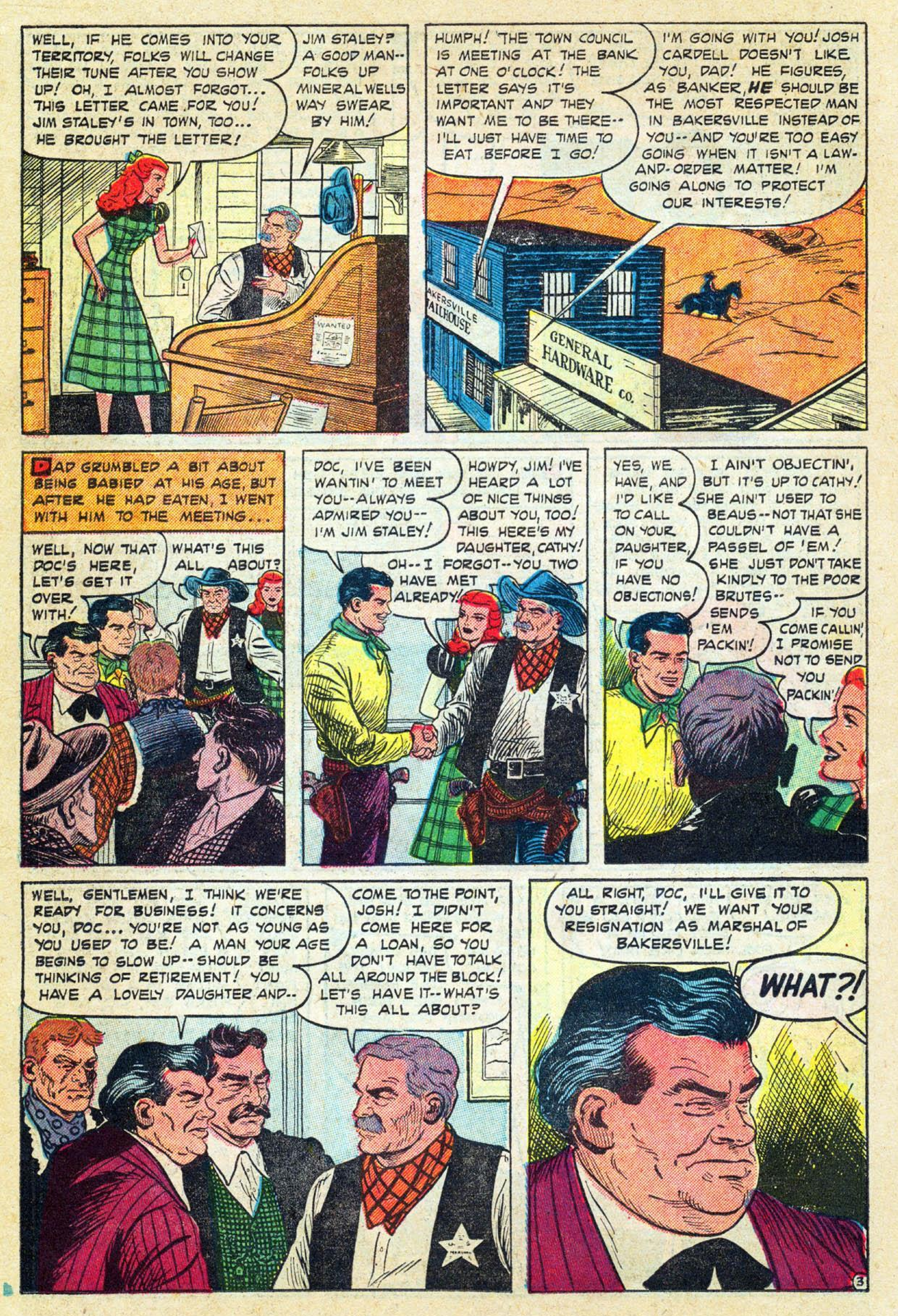
THAT'S MY DAD--"DOC" LEWIS, MARSHAL OF BAKERSVILLE, AND THE GREATEST TWO-GUN MARSHAL OF EAST TEXAS! DAD HAS FACED THEM ALL--KILLERS, OWLHOOT GUNMEN, GAMBLERS, AND HOLDUP MEN, AND NONE OF THEM COULD MATCH HIS COURAGE OR HIS TWO-GUN SKILL!

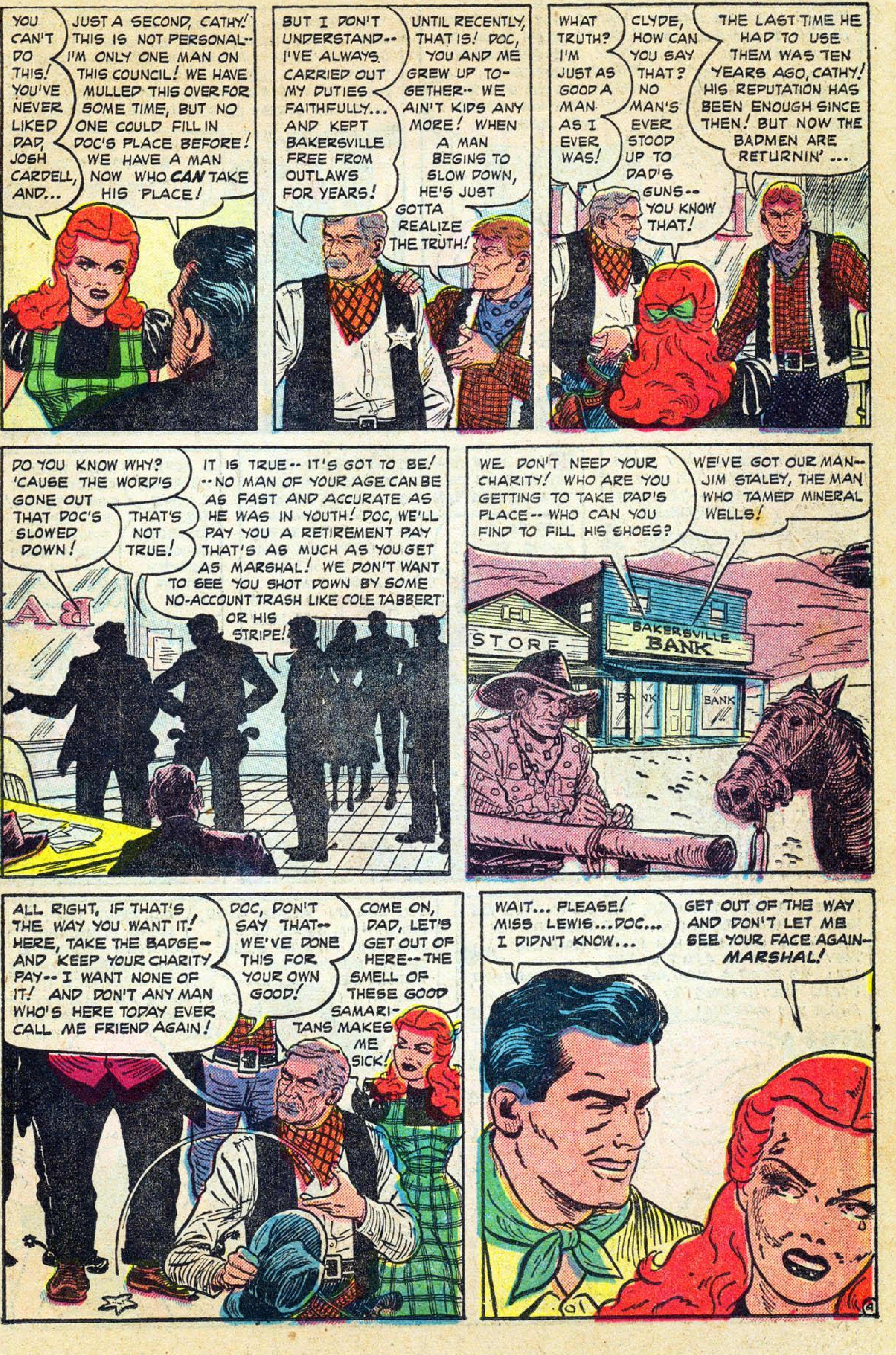
DAD WAS A LEGEND IN THE WEST--A LEGEND OF FIGHTING FEARLESSNESS--AND I WORSHIPPED THAT LEGEND! I HAD ALWAYS REGRETTED THAT I HADN'T BEEN A BOY SO I COULD FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS!

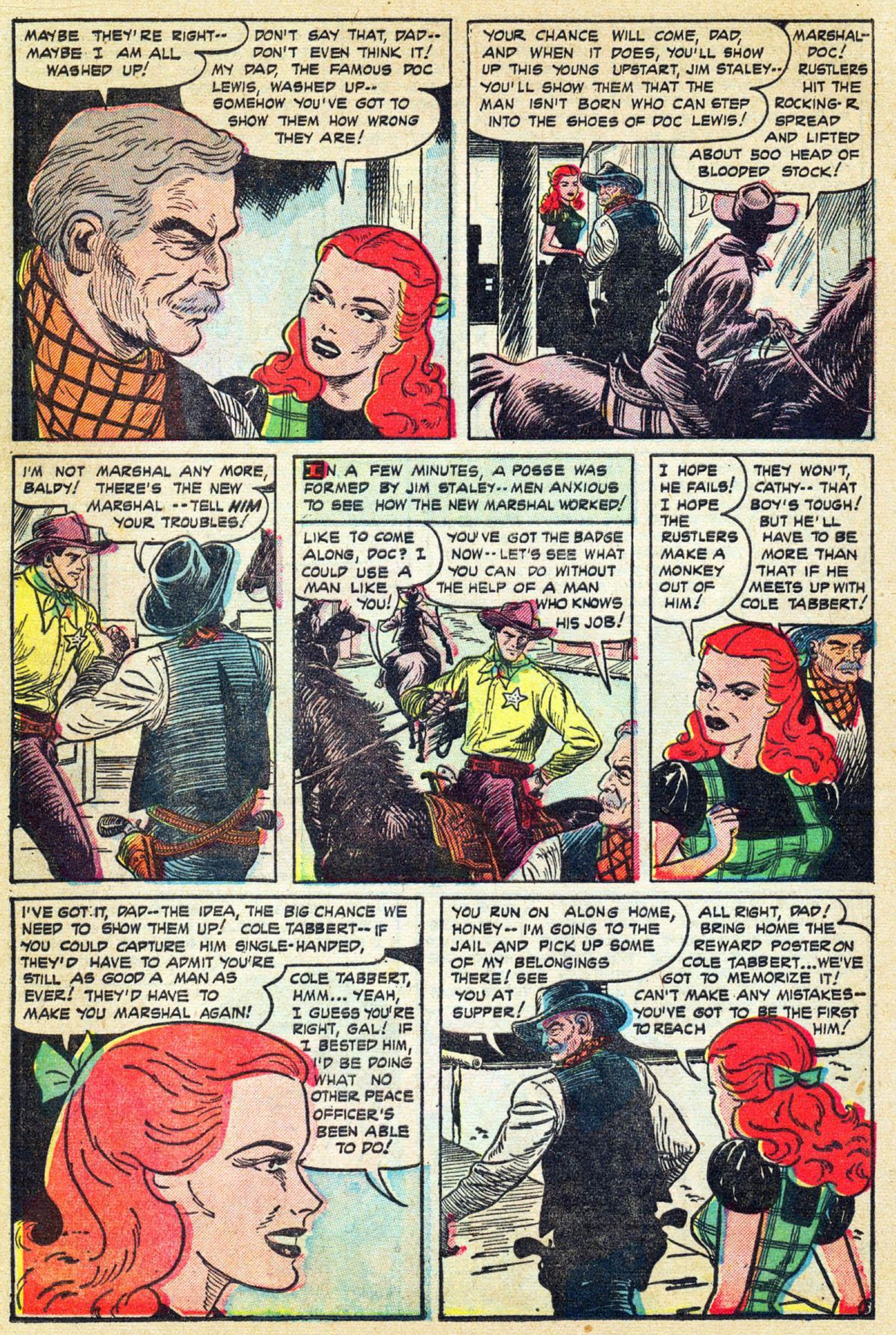

'SCUSE ME, MISS, IS THIS WHERE DOC LEWIS LIVES?
YOU JUST MISSED HIM!

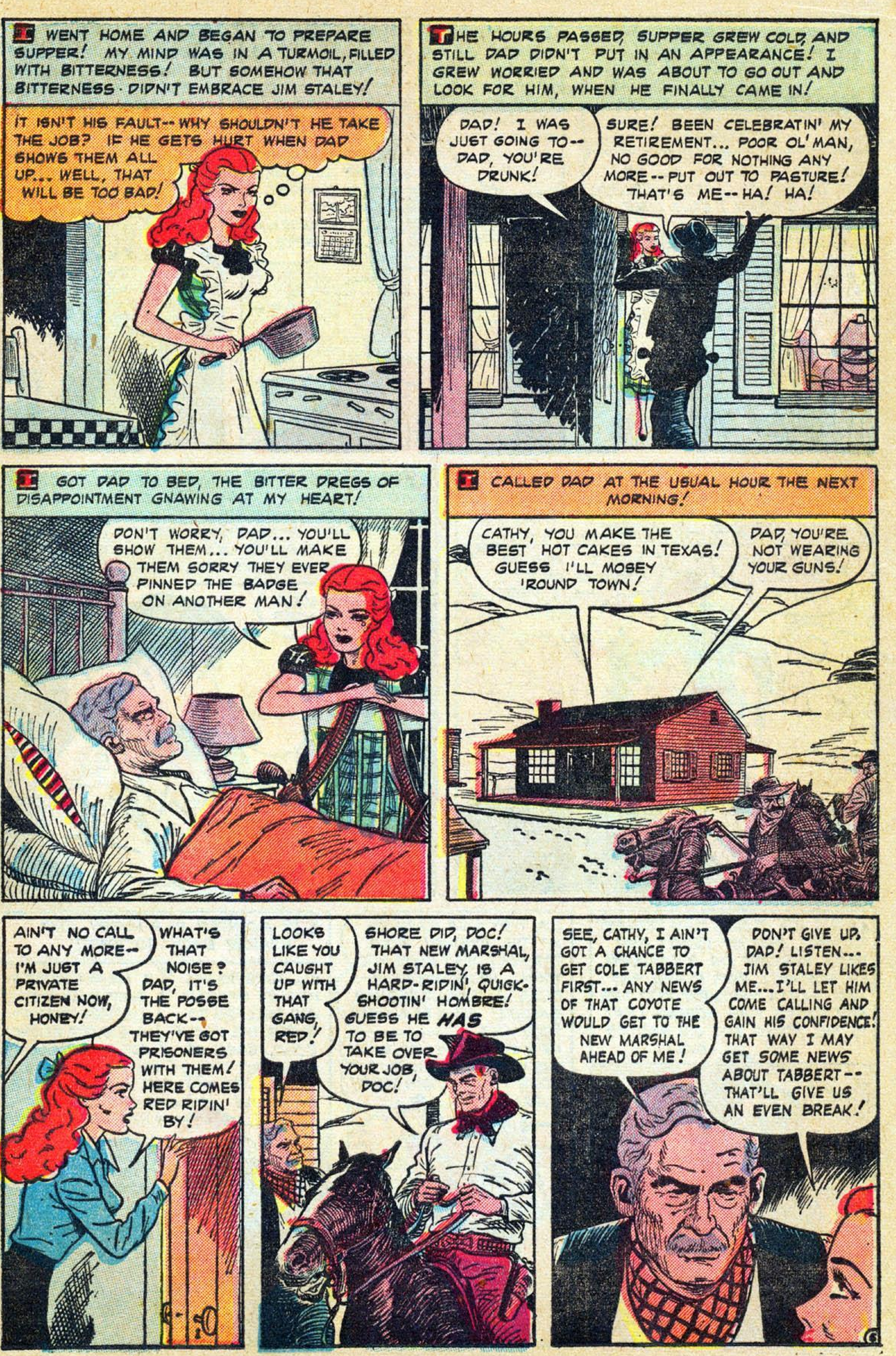

SHUCKS, THAT'S TOO BAD! YOU GIVE HIM THIS MESSAGE, MISS? SAY, IT'S SURE NICE MEETING UP WITH YOU--
DIDN'T EXPECT TO MEET A GIRL AS PRETTY AS YOU IN BAKERSVILLE!
THANK YOU, MISTER--MISTER--?

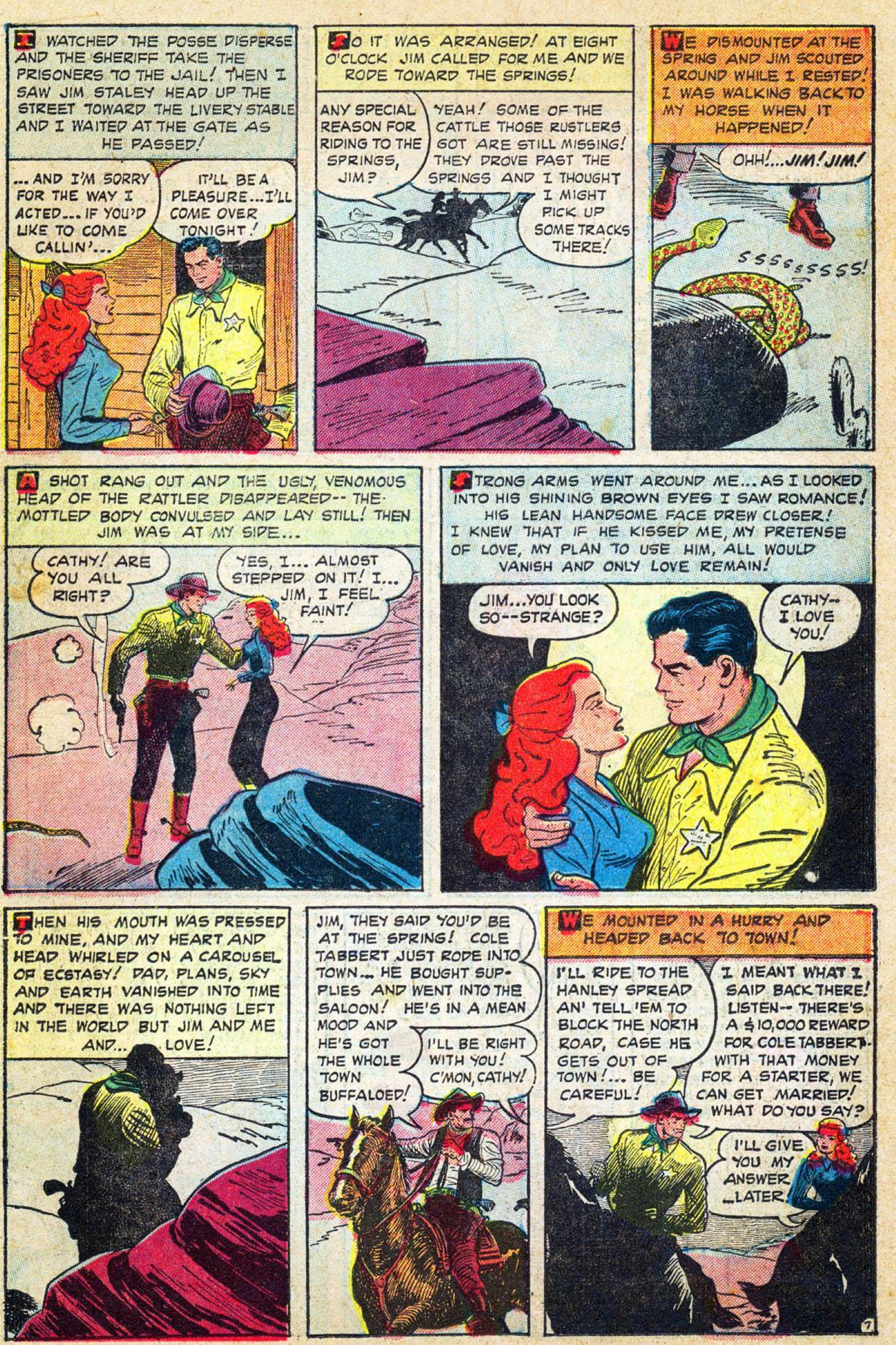

THE NAME IS JIM STALEY, MA'AM... AND I'LL BE COMIN' ROUND TO CALL IF YOU GIVE ME LEAVE!
I'M CATHY LEWIS-- AND I THINK IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOU'D COME TO CALL!
HE WAS TALL AND STRONG AND HANDSOME, AND BUILT LIKE A RIDER! HE WAS THE FIRST MAN WHO HAD EVER INTERESTED ME! HE WALKED DOWN THE STREET, HIS SPURS JINGLING A SONG OF THE WESTLAND-- A SONG THAT FOUND ACCOMPANIMENT IN THE MELODY OF MY HEART!
JIM STALEY! THAT SMILE... OH, HE'S WONDERFUL! JIM STALEY... WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE?
I REMEMBER! HE'S THE YOUNG MARSHAL WHO TAMED MINERAL WELLS... I REMEMBER DAD SPEAKING ABOUT HIM! THE WELLS FOLK SAY HE'S A SECOND DOC LEWIS-- AS THOUGH ANYONE COULD HOPE TO BE AS GOOD A MARSHAL AS DAD! HE'S NICE THOUGH... AND SO HANDSOME! I SURE HOPE HE COMES CALLING!
WHEN THE SUN HAD RISEN HIGH IN THE SKY, I TOOK DAD'S LUNCH DOWN TO THE BAKERSVILLE JAIL!
STORE
BAKERSVILLE JAIL HOUSE
STICK 'EM UP, MARSHAL!
WHY-- CATHY! A GAL COULD GET SHOT PULLIN' A FOOL TRICK LIKE THAT!
WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING SO INTERESTEDLY THAT YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME COME IN?
THIS REWARD NOTICE! IT'S COLE TABBERT -- HE'S BEEN SEEN HEADIN' INTO THIS PART OF THE STATE! HE'S A DOUBLE-BAD HOMBRE!
COLE TABBERT 10,000 REWARD
$10,000 REWARD! GOLLY, THEY MUST WANT HIM AWFUL BAD!
THEY DO! HE'S HELD UP A DOZEN BANKS AND KILLED AT LEAST A DOZEN MEN-- HE'S RUTHLESS, THE WORST KILLER IN A LONG TIME! FOLKS SAY, TOO, HE'S THE FASTEST GUNMAN IN THE WEST TODAY!

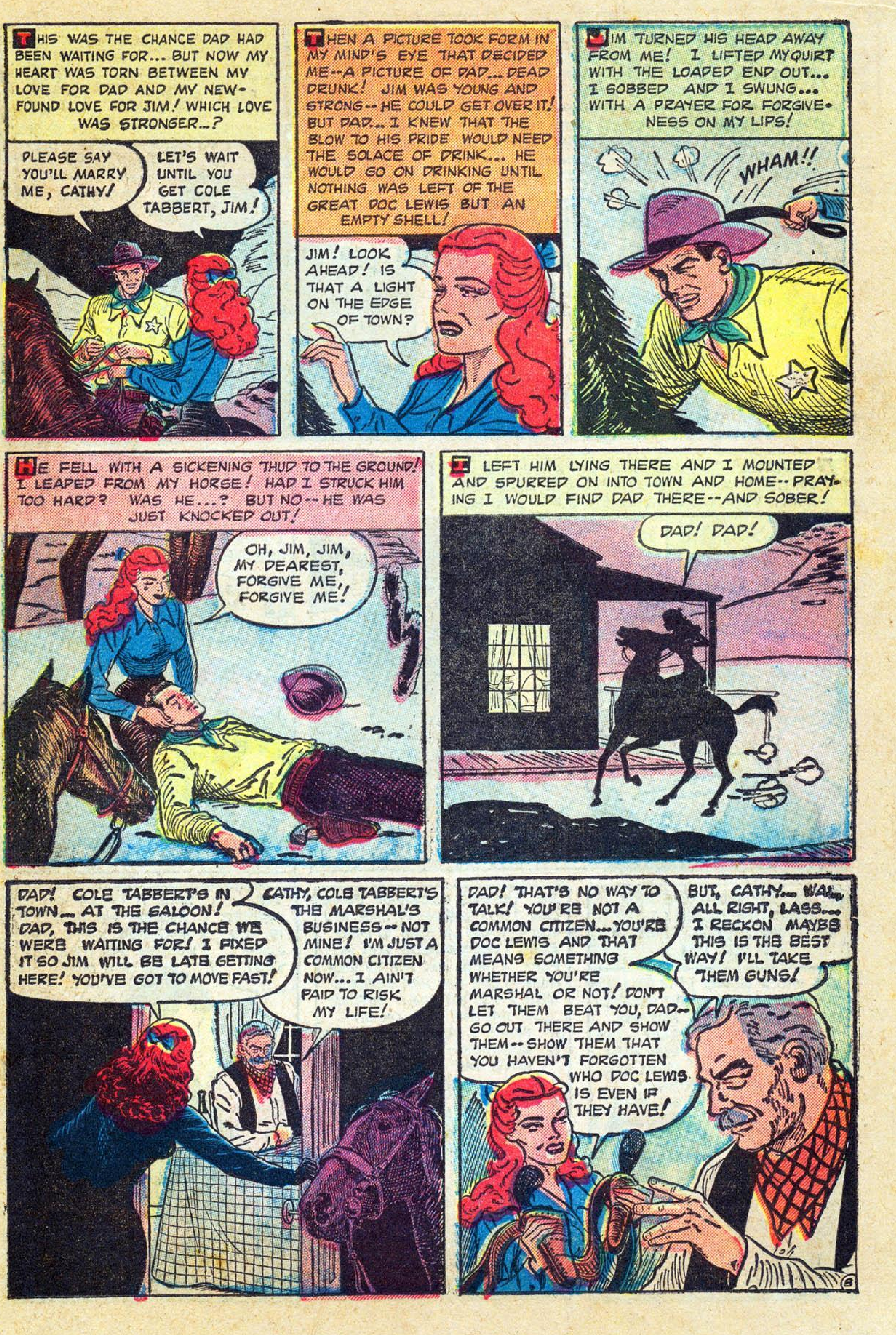

WELL, IF HE COMES INTO YOUR TERRITORY, FOLKS WILL CHANGE THEIR TUNE AFTER YOU SHOW UP! OH, I ALMOST FORGOT... THIS LETTER CAME FOR YOU! JIM STALEY'S IN TOWN, TOO... HE BROUGHT THE LETTER!
JIM STALEY? A GOOD MAN-- FOLKS UP MINERAL WELLS WAY SWEAR BY HIM!
WANTED
HUMPH! THE TOWN COUNCIL IS MEETING AT THE BANK AT ONE O'CLOCK! THE LETTER SAYS IT'S IMPORTANT AND THEY WANT ME TO BE THERE-- I'LL JUST HAVE TIME TO EAT BEFORE I GO!
I'M GOING WITH YOU! JOSH CARDELL DOESN'T LIKE YOU, DAD! HE FIGURES, AS BANKER, HE SHOULD BE THE MOST RESPECTED MAN IN BAKERSVILLE INSTEAD OF YOU-- AND YOU'RE TOO EASY GOING WHEN IT ISN'T A LAW-AND-ORDER MATTER! I'M GOING ALONG TO PROTECT OUR INTERESTS!
AKERSVILLE AILHOUSE
GENERAL HARDWARE CO.
DAD GRUMBLED A BIT ABOUT BEING BABIED AT HIS AGE, BUT AFTER HE HAD EATEN, I WENT WITH HIM TO THE MEETING...
WELL, NOW THAT DOC'S HERE, LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
DOC, I'VE BEEN WANTIN' TO MEET YOU--ALWAYS ADMIRED YOU-- I'M JIM STALEY!
HOWDY, JIM! I'VE HEARD A LOT OF NICE THINGS ABOUT YOU, TOO! THIS HERE'S MY DAUGHTER, CATHY!
OH-- I FORGOT--YOU TWO HAVE MET ALREADY!
YES, WE HAVE, AND I'D LIKE TO CALL ON YOUR DAUGHTER, IF YOU HAVE NO OBJECTIONS!
I AIN'T OBJECTIN', BUT IT'S UP TO CATHY! SHE AIN'T USED TO BEAUS-- NOT THAT SHE COULDN'T HAVE A PASSEL OF 'EM! SHE JUST DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO THE POOR BRUTES-- SENDS 'EM PACKIN'!
IF YOU COME CALLIN', I PROMISE NOT TO SEND YOU PACKIN'!
WELL, GENTLEMEN, I THINK WE'RE READY FOR BUSINESS! IT CONCERNS YOU, DOC... YOU'RE NOT AS YOUNG AS YOU USED TO BE! A MAN YOUR AGE BEGINS TO SLOW UP-- SHOULD BE THINKING OF RETIREMENT! YOU HAVE A LOVELY DAUGHTER AND--
COME TO THE POINT, JOSH! I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A LOAN, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ALL AROUND THE BLOCK! LET'S HAVE IT-- WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
ALL RIGHT, DOC, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT! WE WANT YOUR RESIGNATION AS MARSHAL OF BAKERSVILLE!
WHAT?!

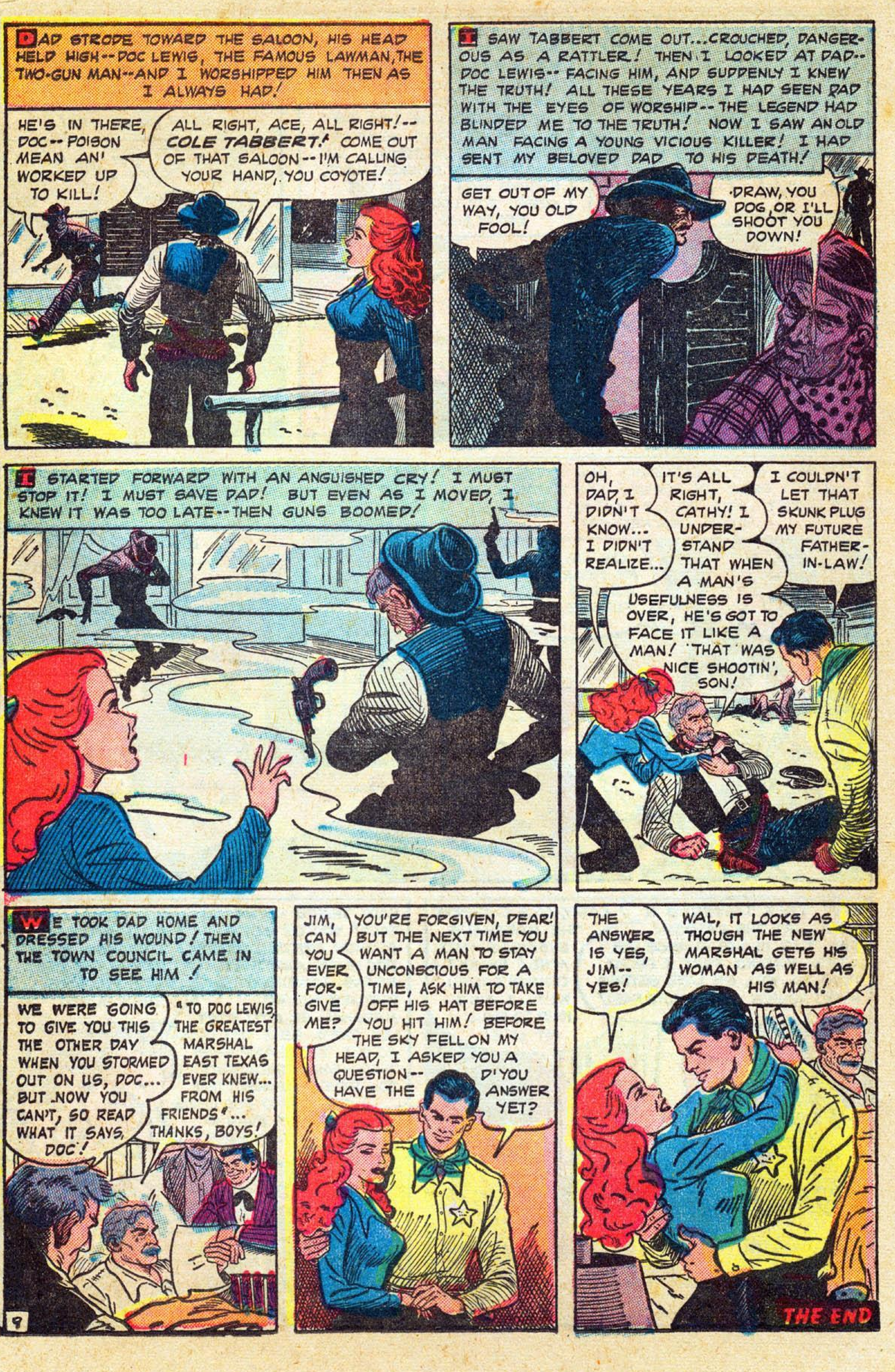

YOU CAN'T DO THIS! YOU'VE NEVER LIKED DAD, JOSH CARDELL, AND...
JUST A SECOND, CATHY! THIS IS NOT PERSONAL-- I'M ONLY ONE MAN ON THIS COUNCIL! WE HAVE MULLED THIS OVER FOR SOME TIME, BUT NO ONE COULD FILL IN DOC'S PLACE BEFORE! WE HAVE A MAN NOW WHO CAN TAKE HIS PLACE!
BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- I'VE ALWAYS CARRIED OUT MY DUTIES FAITHFULLY... AND KEPT BAKERSVILLE FREE FROM OUTLAWS FOR YEARS!
UNTIL RECENTLY, THAT IS! DOC, YOU AND ME GREW UP TOGETHER-- WE AIN'T KIDS ANY MORE! WHEN A MAN BEGINS TO SLOW DOWN, HE'S JUST GOTTA REALIZE THE TRUTH!
WHAT TRUTH? I'M JUST AS GOOD A MAN AS I EVER WAS!
CLYDE, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? NO MAN'S EVER STOOD UP TO DAD'S GUNS-- YOU KNOW THAT!
THE LAST TIME HE HAD TO USE THEM WAS TEN YEARS AGO, CATHY! HIS REPUTATION HAS BEEN ENOUGH SINCE THEN! BUT NOW THE BADMEN ARE RETURNIN' ...
DO YOU KNOW WHY? 'CAUSE THE WORD'S GONE OUT THAT DOC'S SLOWED DOWN!
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
IT IS TRUE-- IT'S GOT TO BE! --NO MAN OF YOUR AGE CAN BE AS FAST AND ACCURATE AS HE WAS IN YOUTH! DOC, WE'LL PAY YOU A RETIREMENT PAY THAT'S AS MUCH AS YOU GET AS MARSHAL! WE DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU SHOT DOWN BY SOME NO-ACCOUNT TRASH LIKE COLE TABBERT OR HIS STRIPE!
WE DON'T NEED YOUR CHARITY! WHO ARE YOU GETTING TO TAKE DAD'S PLACE-- WHO CAN YOU FIND TO FILL HIS SHOES?
WE'VE GOT OUR MAN-- JIM STALEY, THE MAN WHO TAMED MINERAL WELLS!
STORE
BAKERSVILLE BANK
BANK
BANK
ALL RIGHT, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT! HERE, TAKE THE BADGE-- AND KEEP YOUR CHARITY PAY-- I WANT NONE OF IT! AND DON'T ANY MAN WHO'S HERE TODAY EVER CALL ME FRIEND AGAIN!
DOC, DON'T SAY THAT-- WE'VE DONE THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
COME ON, DAD, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE-- THE SMELL OF THESE GOOD SAMARITANS MAKES ME SICK!
WAIT... PLEASE! MISS LEWIS...DOC... I DIDN'T KNOW...
GET OUT OF THE WAY AND DON'T LET ME SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN-- MARSHAL!
4

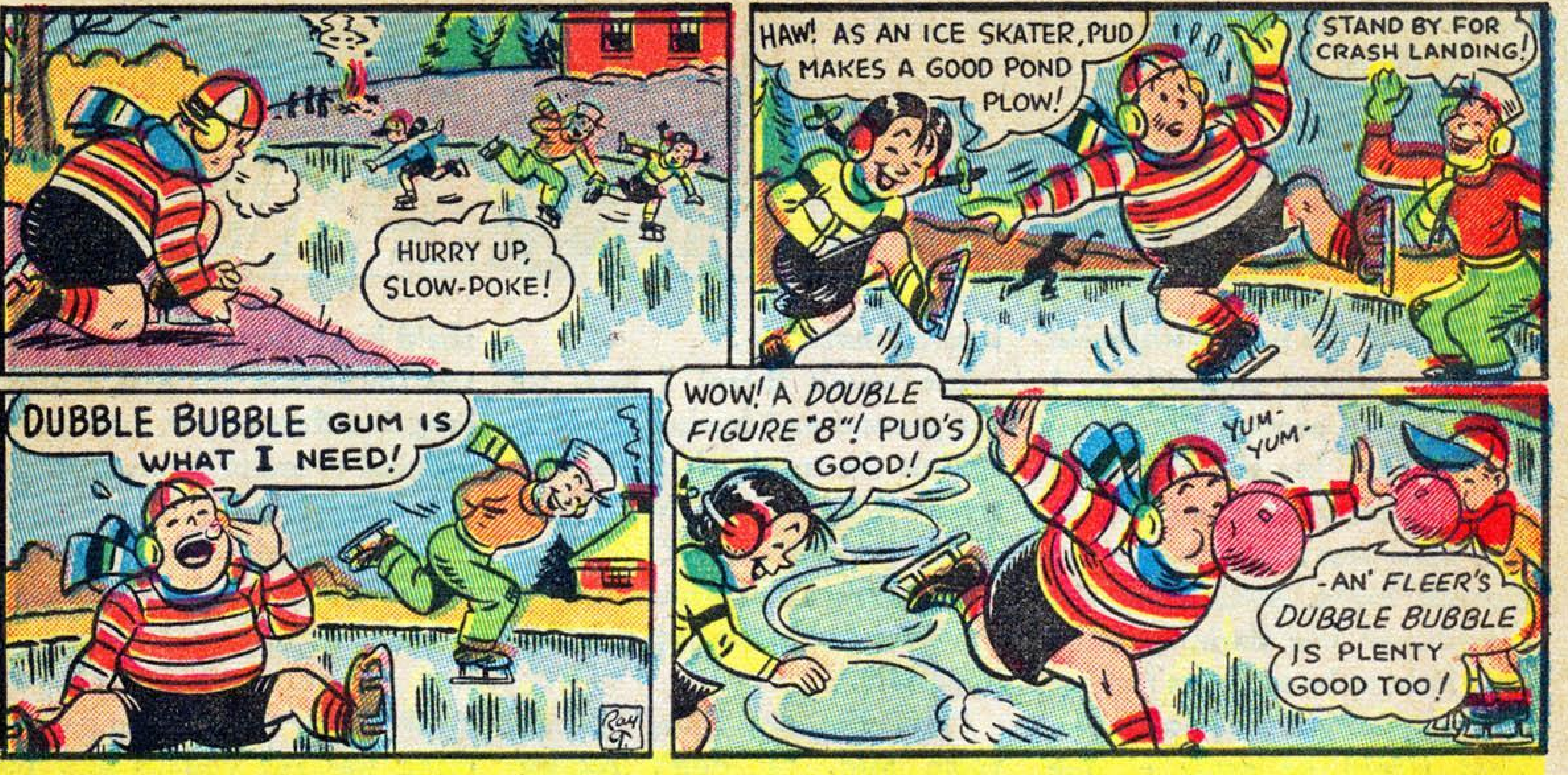

MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT-- MAYBE I AM ALL WASHED UP!
DON'T SAY THAT, DAD-- DON'T EVEN THINK IT! MY DAD, THE FAMOUS DOC LEWIS, WASHED UP-- SOMEHOW YOU'VE GOT TO SHOW THEM HOW WRONG THEY ARE!
YOUR CHANCE WILL COME, DAD, AND WHEN IT DOES, YOU'LL SHOW UP THIS YOUNG UPSTART, JIM STALEY-- YOU'LL SHOW THEM THAT THE MAN ISN'T BORN WHO CAN STEP INTO THE SHOES OF DOC LEWIS!
MARSHAL-- DOC! RUSTLERS HIT THE ROCKING-R SPREAD AND LIFTED ABOUT 500 HEAD OF BLOODED STOCK!
I'M NOT MARSHAL ANY MORE, BALDY! THERE'S THE NEW MARSHAL --TELL HIM YOUR TROUBLES!
IN A FEW MINUTES, A POSSE WAS FORMED BY JIM STALEY-- MEN ANXIOUS TO SEE HOW THE NEW MARSHAL WORKED!
LIKE TO COME ALONG, DOC? I COULD USE A MAN LIKE YOU!
YOU'VE GOT THE BADGE NOW-- LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO WITHOUT THE HELP OF A MAN WHO KNOWS HIS JOB!
I HOPE HE FAILS! I HOPE THE RUSTLERS MAKE A MONKEY OUT OF HIM!
THEY WON'T, CATHY-- THAT BOY'S TOUGH! BUT HE'LL HAVE TO BE MORE THAN THAT IF HE MEETS UP WITH COLE TABBERT!
I'VE GOT IT, DAD-- THE IDEA, THE BIG CHANCE WE NEED TO SHOW THEM UP! COLE TABBERT-- IF YOU COULD CAPTURE HIM SINGLE-HANDED, THEY'D HAVE TO ADMIT YOU'RE STILL AS GOOD A MAN AS EVER! THEY'D HAVE TO MAKE YOU MARSHAL AGAIN!
COLE TABBERT, HMM... YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, GAL! IF I BESTED HIM, I'D BE DOING WHAT NO OTHER PEACE OFFICER'S BEEN ABLE TO DO!
YOU RUN ON ALONG HOME, HONEY-- I'M GOING TO THE JAIL AND PICK UP SOME OF MY BELONGINGS THERE! SEE YOU AT SUPPER!
ALL RIGHT, DAD! BRING HOME THE REWARD POSTER ON COLE TABBERT... WE'VE GOT TO MEMORIZE IT! CAN'T MAKE ANY MISTAKES-- YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE FIRST TO REACH HIM!


I WENT HOME AND BEGAN TO PREPARE SUPPER! MY MIND WAS IN A TURMOIL, FILLED WITH BITTERNESS! BUT SOMEHOW THAT BITTERNESS DIDN'T EMBRACE JIM STALEY!
IT ISN'T HIS FAULT-- WHY SHOULDN'T HE TAKE THE JOB? IF HE GETS HURT WHEN DAD SHOWS THEM ALL UP... WELL, THAT WILL BE TOO BAD!
THE HOURS PASSED, SUPPER GREW COLD, AND STILL DAD DIDN'T PUT IN AN APPEARANCE! I GREW WORRIED AND WAS ABOUT TO GO OUT AND LOOK FOR HIM, WHEN HE FINALLY CAME IN!
DAD! I WAS JUST GOING TO-- DAD, YOU'RE DRUNK!
SURE! BEEN CELEBRATIN' MY RETIREMENT... POOR OL' MAN, NO GOOD FOR NOTHING ANY MORE-- PUT OUT TO PASTURE! THAT'S ME-- HA! HA!
I GOT DAD TO BED, THE BITTER DREGS OF DISAPPOINTMENT GNAWING AT MY HEART!
DON'T WORRY, DAD... YOU'LL SHOW THEM... YOU'LL MAKE THEM SORRY THEY EVER PINNED THE BADGE ON ANOTHER MAN!
I CALLED DAD AT THE USUAL HOUR THE NEXT MORNING!
CATHY, YOU MAKE THE BEST HOT CAKES IN TEXAS! GUESS I'LL MOSEY 'ROUND TOWN!
DAD, YOU'RE NOT WEARING YOUR GUNS!
AIN'T NO CALL TO ANY MORE-- I'M JUST A PRIVATE CITIZEN NOW, HONEY!
WHAT'S THAT NOISE? DAD, IT'S THE POSSE BACK-- THEY'VE GOT PRISONERS WITH THEM! HERE COMES RED RIDIN' BY!
LOOKS LIKE YOU CAUGHT UP WITH THAT GANG, RED!
SHORE DID, DOC! THAT NEW MARSHAL, JIM STALEY, IS A HARD-RIDIN', QUICK-SHOOTIN' HOMBRE! GUESS HE HAS TO BE TO TAKE OVER YOUR JOB, DOC!
SEE, CATHY, I AIN'T GOT A CHANCE TO GET COLE TABBERT FIRST... ANY NEWS OF THAT COYOTE WOULD GET TO THE NEW MARSHAL AHEAD OF ME!
DON'T GIVE UP, DAD! LISTEN... JIM STALEY LIKES ME... I'LL LET HIM COME CALLING AND GAIN HIS CONFIDENCE! THAT WAY I MAY GET SOME NEWS ABOUT TABBERT-- THAT'LL GIVE US AN EVEN BREAK!


I WATCHED THE POSSE DISPERSE AND THE SHERIFF TAKE THE PRISONERS TO THE JAIL! THEN I SAW JIM STALEY HEAD UP THE STREET TOWARD THE LIVERY STABLE AND I WAITED AT THE GATE AS HE PASSED!
... AND I'M SORRY FOR THE WAY I ACTED... IF YOU'D LIKE TO COME CALLIN'...
IT'LL BE A PLEASURE...I'LL COME OVER TONIGHT!
SO IT WAS ARRANGED! AT EIGHT O'CLOCK JIM CALLED FOR ME AND WE RODE TOWARD THE SPRINGS!
ANY SPECIAL REASON FOR RIDING TO THE SPRINGS, JIM?
YEAH! SOME OF THE CATTLE THOSE RUSTLERS GOT ARE STILL MISSING! THEY DROVE PAST THE SPRINGS AND I THOUGHT I MIGHT PICK UP SOME TRACKS THERE!
WE DISMOUNTED AT THE SPRING AND JIM SCOUTED AROUND WHILE I RESTED! I WAS WALKING BACK TO MY HORSE WHEN IT HAPPENED!
OHH!...JIM! JIM!
SSSSSSSSSS!
A SHOT RANG OUT AND THE UGLY, VENOMOUS HEAD OF THE RATTLER DISAPPEARED-- THE MOTTLED BODY CONVULSED AND LAY STILL! THEN JIM WAS AT MY SIDE...
CATHY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, I... ALMOST STEPPED ON IT! I... JIM, I FEEL FAINT!
STRONG ARMS WENT AROUND ME... AS I LOOKED INTO HIS SHINING BROWN EYES I SAW ROMANCE! HIS LEAN HANDSOME FACE DREW CLOSER! I KNEW THAT IF HE KISSED ME, MY PRETENSE OF LOVE, MY PLAN TO USE HIM, ALL WOULD VANISH AND ONLY LOVE REMAIN!
JIM...YOU LOOK SO--STRANGE?
CATHY-- I LOVE YOU!
THEN HIS MOUTH WAS PRESSED TO MINE, AND MY HEART AND HEAD WHIRLED ON A CAROUSEL OF ECSTASY! DAD, PLANS, SKY AND EARTH VANISHED INTO TIME AND THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT IN THE WORLD BUT JIM AND ME AND... LOVE!
JIM, THEY SAID YOU'D BE AT THE SPRING! COLE TABBERT JUST RODE INTO TOWN... HE BOUGHT SUPPLIES AND WENT INTO THE SALOON! HE'S IN A MEAN MOOD AND HE'S GOT THE WHOLE TOWN BUFFALOED!
I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU! C'MON, CATHY!
WE MOUNTED IN A HURRY AND HEADED BACK TO TOWN!
I'LL RIDE TO THE HANLEY SPREAD AN' TELL 'EM TO BLOCK THE NORTH ROAD, CASE HE GETS OUT OF TOWN!... BE CAREFUL!
I MEANT WHAT I SAID BACK THERE! LISTEN-- THERE'S A $10,000 REWARD FOR COLE TABBERT. WITH THAT MONEY FOR A STARTER, WE CAN GET MARRIED! WHAT DO YOU SAY?
I'LL GIVE YOU MY ANSWER ...LATER.
7


THIS WAS THE CHANCE DAD HAD BEEN WAITING FOR... BUT NOW MY HEART WAS TORN BETWEEN MY LOVE FOR DAD AND MY NEW-FOUND LOVE FOR JIM! WHICH LOVE WAS STRONGER...?
PLEASE SAY YOU'LL MARRY ME, CATHY!
LET'S WAIT UNTIL YOU GET COLE TABBERT, JIM!
THEN A PICTURE TOOK FORM IN MY MIND'S EYE THAT DECIDED ME--A PICTURE OF DAD... DEAD DRUNK! JIM WAS YOUNG AND STRONG--HE COULD GET OVER IT! BUT DAD... I KNEW THAT THE BLOW TO HIS PRIDE WOULD NEED THE SOLACE OF DRINK... HE WOULD GO ON DRINKING UNTIL NOTHING WAS LEFT OF THE GREAT DOC LEWIS BUT AN EMPTY SHELL!
JIM! LOOK AHEAD! IS THAT A LIGHT ON THE EDGE OF TOWN?
JIM TURNED HIS HEAD AWAY FROM ME! I LIFTED MY QUIRT WITH THE LOADED END OUT... I SOBBED AND I SWUNG... WITH A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS ON MY LIPS!
WHAM!!
HE FELL WITH A SICKENING THUD TO THE GROUND! I LEAPED FROM MY HORSE! HAD I STRUCK HIM TOO HARD? WAS HE...? BUT NO--HE WAS JUST KNOCKED OUT!
OH, JIM, JIM, MY DEAREST, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME!
I LEFT HIM LYING THERE AND I MOUNTED AND SPURRED ON INTO TOWN AND HOME--PRAYING I WOULD FIND DAD THERE--AND SOBER!
DAD! DAD!
DAD! COLE TABBERT'S IN TOWN... AT THE SALOON! DAD, THIS IS THE CHANCE WE WERE WAITING FOR! I FIXED IT SO JIM WILL BE LATE GETTING HERE! YOU'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST!
CATHY, COLE TABBERT'S THE MARSHAL'S BUSINESS--NOT MINE! I'M JUST A COMMON CITIZEN NOW... I AIN'T PAID TO RISK MY LIFE!
DAD! THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK! YOU'RE NOT A COMMON CITIZEN... YOU'RE DOC LEWIS AND THAT MEANS SOMETHING WHETHER YOU'RE MARSHAL OR NOT! DON'T LET THEM BEAT YOU, DAD--GO OUT THERE AND SHOW THEM--SHOW THEM THAT YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN WHO DOC LEWIS IS EVEN IF THEY HAVE!
BUT, CATHY... WAL... ALL RIGHT, LASS... I RECKON MAYBE THIS IS THE BEST WAY! I'LL TAKE THEM GUNS!


DAD STRODE TOWARD THE SALOON, HIS HEAD HELD HIGH--DOC LEWIS, THE FAMOUS LAWMAN, THE TWO-GUN MAN--AND I WORSHIPPED HIM THEN AS I ALWAYS HAD!
HE'S IN THERE, DOC--POISON MEAN AN' WORKED UP TO KILL!
ALL RIGHT, ACE, ALL RIGHT!--COLE TABBERT! COME OUT OF THAT SALOON--I'M CALLING YOUR HAND, YOU COYOTE!
I SAW TABBERT COME OUT...CROUCHED, DANGEROUS AS A RATTLER! THEN I LOOKED AT DAD--DOC LEWIS--FACING HIM, AND SUDDENLY I KNEW THE TRUTH! ALL THESE YEARS I HAD SEEN DAD WITH THE EYES OF WORSHIP--THE LEGEND HAD BLINDED ME TO THE TRUTH! NOW I SAW AN OLD MAN FACING A YOUNG VICIOUS KILLER! I HAD SENT MY BELOVED DAD TO HIS DEATH!
GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU OLD FOOL!
DRAW, YOU DOG, OR I'LL SHOOT YOU DOWN!
I STARTED FORWARD WITH AN ANGUISHED CRY! I MUST STOP IT! I MUST SAVE DAD! BUT EVEN AS I MOVED, I KNEW IT WAS TOO LATE--THEN GUNS BOOMED!
OH, DAD, I DIDN'T KNOW... I DIDN'T REALIZE...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CATHY! I UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN A MAN'S USEFULNESS IS OVER, HE'S GOT TO FACE IT LIKE A MAN! THAT WAS NICE SHOOTIN', SON!
I COULDN'T LET THAT SKUNK PLUG MY FUTURE FATHER-IN-LAW!
WE TOOK DAD HOME AND DRESSED HIS WOUND! THEN THE TOWN COUNCIL CAME IN TO SEE HIM!
WE WERE GOING TO GIVE YOU THIS THE OTHER DAY WHEN YOU STORMED OUT ON US, DOC... BUT NOW YOU CAN'T, SO READ WHAT IT SAYS, DOC!
"TO DOC LEWIS, THE GREATEST MARSHAL EAST TEXAS EVER KNEW... FROM HIS FRIENDS"... THANKS, BOYS!
JIM, CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?
YOU'RE FORGIVEN, DEAR! BUT THE NEXT TIME YOU WANT A MAN TO STAY UNCONSCIOUS FOR A TIME, ASK HIM TO TAKE OFF HIS HAT BEFORE YOU HIT HIM! BEFORE THE SKY FELL ON MY HEAD, I ASKED YOU A QUESTION--D'YOU HAVE THE ANSWER YET?
THE ANSWER IS YES, JIM--YES!
WAL, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE NEW MARSHAL GETS HIS WOMAN AS WELL AS HIS MAN!
THE END


HURRY UP, SLOW-POKE!
HAW! AS AN ICE SKATER, PUD MAKES A GOOD POND PLOW!
STAND BY FOR CRASH LANDING!
DUBBLE BUBBLE GUM IS WHAT I NEED!
ROY
WOW! A *DOUBLE FIGURE "8"*! PUD'S GOOD!
YUM-YUM-
-AN' FLEER'S DUBBLE BUBBLE IS PLENTY GOOD TOO!

POP!
FLEERS
DUBBLE BUBBLE GUM

WHEN IT COMES TO BLOWING BUBBLES, FLEER'S DUBBLE BUBBLE CAN'T BE BEAT!

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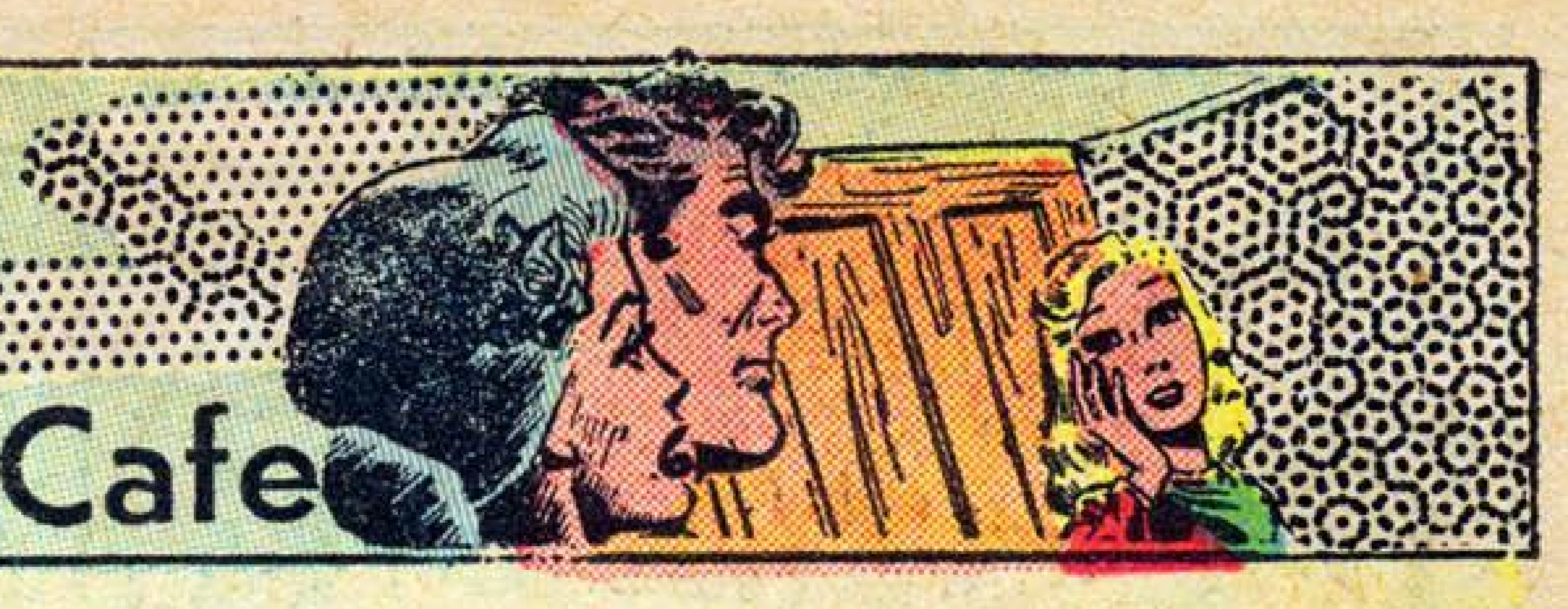
The Girl At The Silver Star Cafe



ONE of the horses whinnied and stirred restlessly as I stole quietly around the corral and headed for the clump of pines which formed a patch of inky blackness in the pale white, moonlit night. Behind me the ranchhouse was dark, and the only light to be seen was further off to my left, in the bunkhouse. That would be some of the ranch hands, playing a last hand of poker before bunking down for the night. Was Rick there? I wondered. No, he *couldn't* be! He *had* to be at the pines, waiting for me, as he had waited so often before.

But something had happened the week before, something which made him distant and preoccupied, and something which might keep him from meeting me. I had to know what that something was, and if Rick wasn't there at our meeting place, I would even risk asking Jake. Jake was my brother and foreman of the Bar-Q, which we owned together. He was the one who knew Rick best; they'd been buddies in the army and when he came back from the war, Jake had brought Rick with him. As far as I was concerned, it was love right from the start, but Rick had insisted that we keep it a secret from Jake and meet only late at night at the pines, where no one would see us. I was so much in love, I didn't ask any questions — as long as I could be with Rick sometimes, held close in the circle of his arms, that was all that mattered . . .

He wasn't there! I sank to the ground and buried my face against the trunk of one of the trees. Where was he? Why didn't he come, *why*?

Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder and looked up quickly, hopefully.

"No, I'm not Rick," Jake's voice said. "I don't reckon Rick'll be comin' any more."

"Jake!" I exclaimed. "How did you know—about Rick and me?"

"One of the boys told me more'n a week ago that he heard voices out here late at night. I investigated an' saw the two o' you. I was fixin' to do somethin' about it, to break you up somehow, but the next day *she* came to town, an' I figgered Rick wouldn't be botherin' with you any more!"

"She?" He couldn't ignore the urgency in my voice. "Who's *she*?"

In the dim light I could see that he was looking at me with sympathy. Jake was a pretty rough and tough guy, but he'd always been soft hearted where I was concerned.

"The girl at the Silver Star Cafe!" he said. "So you'd better forget him!"

The Silver Star Cafe was a dance hall, a popular place with some of the more shiftless characters around Mesquite City. From what I'd overheard of the ranchhands' conversations, there was a new girl working there, singing, and also circulating with the customers, and she'd been there a week. So *that* was the reason for Rick's week-long indifference—it had never occured to me to connect up the two things!

Jake sat down beside me, frowning. "Ever since you were a kid, Liz," he said slowly, "I had the responsibility of you. And I knew the most important thing was for you to find the right kind of man to love. Not the kind who'd go for a cheap dance-hall floozy — and that's the kind Rick is! That's why I told him to stay away from you —but he didn't listen, the low-down . . .!"

His voice had gotten hard and venomous with the last words. Then he went on more quietly.

"Every week, while we were in the army, wherever we were, Rick got a letter in the same feminine handwriting. One day I saw him opening one of these letters, and a picture fell out. It was a picture of *her*, the girl at the Silver Star Cafe, dressed in a lot of feathers, and across the bottom was written, 'Love and kisses from Cora to Rick'. Then when I saw him with you, I remembered all that, and knew he wasn't the guy for you. And I was right — I've been proved right, now!"

Jake got up and started back toward the house. "Get some sleep," he said softly, "and forget that coyote!"

How could I forget him? It was easy to say, but I knew I could no more stop loving Rick Masters than I could stop

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breathing. Suddenly something Jake had said came back to me. He said Rick had *torn up* the picture! Why would he have torn it up, if it were a picture of the girl he loved?

I jumped up. Whatever the explanation was, I had to know! Quietly I saddled my horse and jumping on, I urged him to a gallop.

The main street of Mesquite City was mostly dark and shuttered, but the Silver Star was a throbbing oasis of light and noise. I took a deep breath, and pushed open the swinging doors.

As I entered the big garish room, rough hands reached out for me.

"Dance, doll face?" An unshaven face leered uncomfortably close to mine. I pushed him aside, and pressed forward through the crowd. Timidly I asked a waiter where Cora was.

"She's in her dressing room, back there!" he said. I hurried in the direction he indicated, to a door in a curtained alcove. I was about to go in when I heard the one sound I had hoped I wouldn't hear—Rick's voice. So it was true! I sank against the door, despair filling me.

"All right, Cora," I could hear Rick's voice clearly. "I've tried and tried to get you to quit this racket, but I give up."

I turned to leave, completely defeated, but there was someone blocking my path. It was Jake.

"When I saw your horse was gone, I figured you'd come here," he said. "Now get home. This is no place for you."

Behind me I could hear Rick's voice again. I guess you've forgotten the things Dad used to tell you!"

"Oh, *Dad*!" the girl's voice said scornfully. "He had a lot of fuddy-duddy ideas!"

I was about to go with Jake, when out of the senseless jumble of words I had heard, one thing became clear.

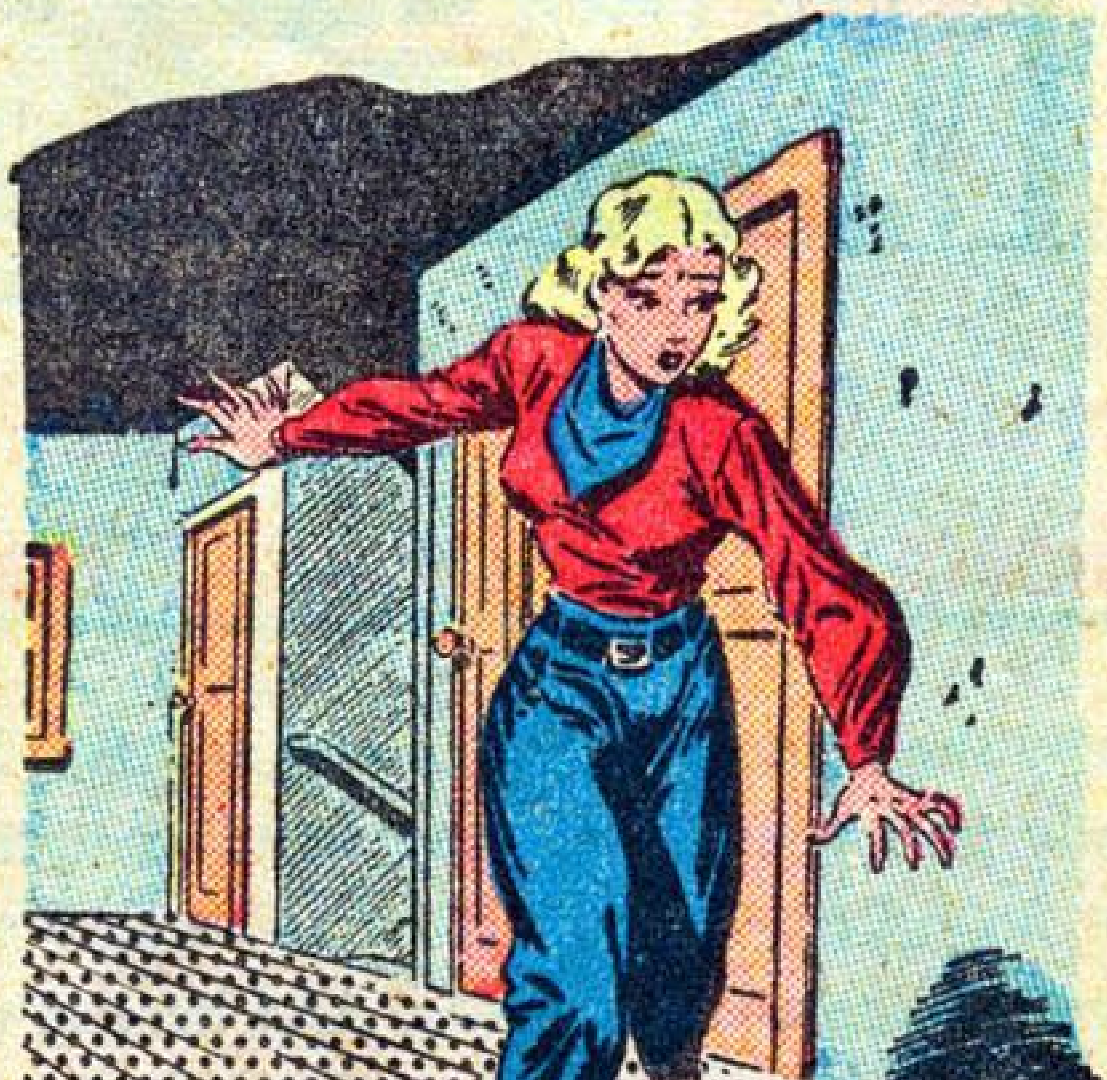
"Jake," I whispered. "He called him Dad, and she called him Dad!"

"What are you talking about?" he asked impatiently.

Without answering, I whirled, and pushed the door open. Rick looked up in surprise, and so did the beautiful blonde girl sitting before the dressing table.

"Liz!" Rick exclaimed, but I was already in his arms. "Oh, darling!" I breathed, "We thought—I thought—"

"It's no good, Liz" Rick said, pushing me away from him. "Jake's right, I'm not the kind of guy for you. Can't you tell?" he motioned toward the girl. "This is my sister."



His voice was bitter, but the thing I noticed then was the hurt in Cora's eyes. She sat silent for a minute, frowning, and then watched as Jake reached for my arm to lead me away.

"Wait," she said quietly. "I guess I'm the one who's been on the wrong track. I didn't like it when you were ashamed of me, Rick, I even used to try to rub it in by sending you pictures and stuff when you were in the army. But I guess you had a *right* to be ashamed. . ."

We were all listening to her now, even Jake. And as she talked, Rick reached out for my hand and held it, tight.

"When Dad died, you took your responsibility for me so seriously that I did everything I could to show you I could take care of myself. I guess taking a job in a dance hall was my last gesture to show you my independence. But if this is what I'm doing, breaking up your romance—" She looked at me, and I smiled. "Well, it's no good," she said, dropping her eyes, "and I'm sorry. Forget about me, I'll go away somewhere . . ."

"Why go away?" Unaccountably, it was Jake's voice. I looked at him questioningly, and Cora's eyes, too, were on him, puzzled.

"I mean it," Jake said. "Come on out to the Bar-Q—the place could use another cook. It's nothing fancy," he smiled apologetically.

Cora stood up. "I think it sounds wonderful!" she said.

Rick's arm drew me to him. "What a set-up!" he said. "Two protective big brothers, with their sisters right there where they can keep an eye on 'em!" We all laughed. Jake smiled at Cora.

"Right now," he said, "*I'll* keep an eye on your sister for you! Come on, Cora! Bring your duds an' I'll take you out to the ranch!"

When they'd gone, Rick turned to take me in his arms. "Jake's a good guy," he said against my hair. "He'll always do the right thing."

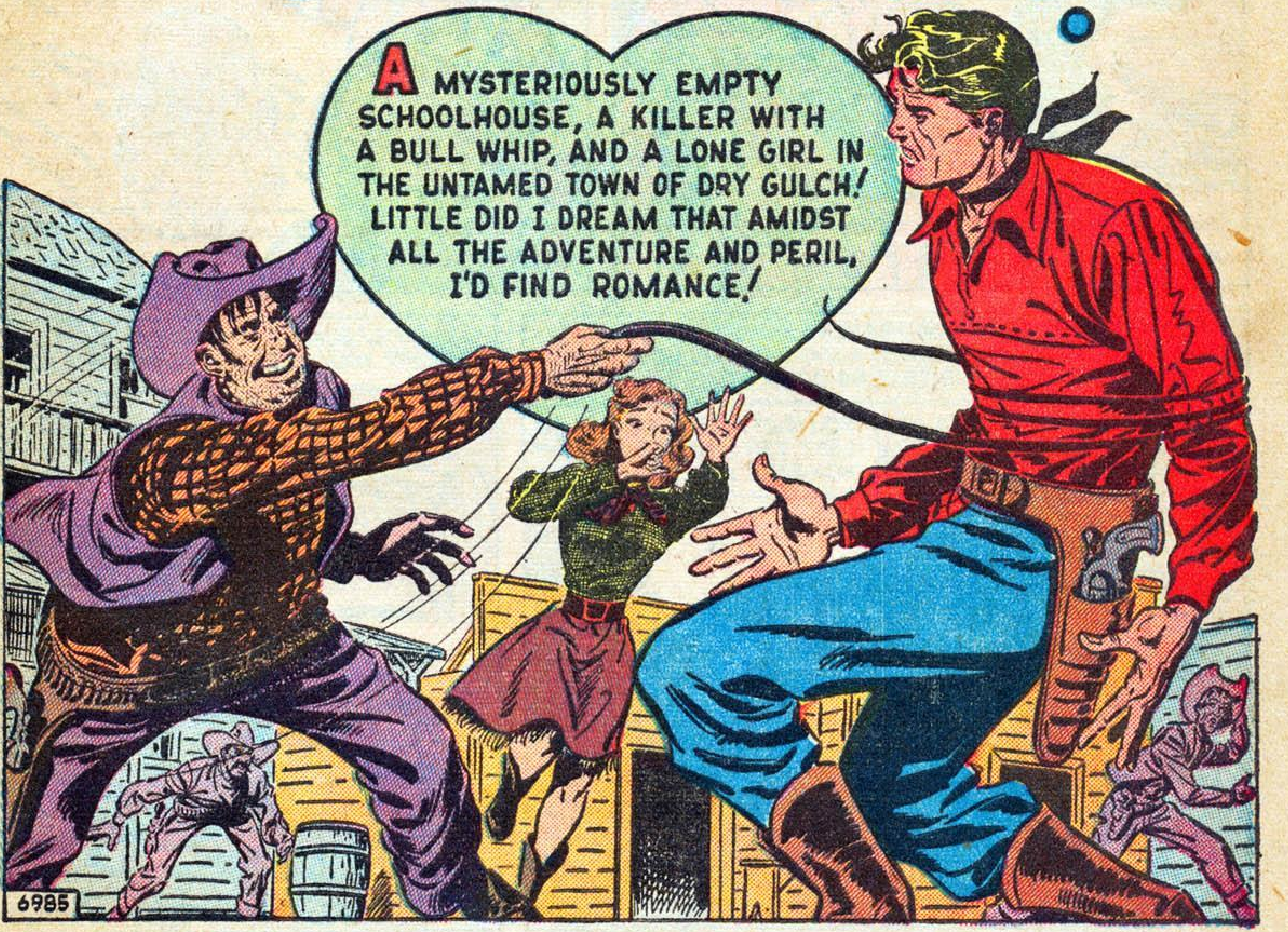
"I think Cora will too, from now on," I said. "I'm going to like her, Rick!"

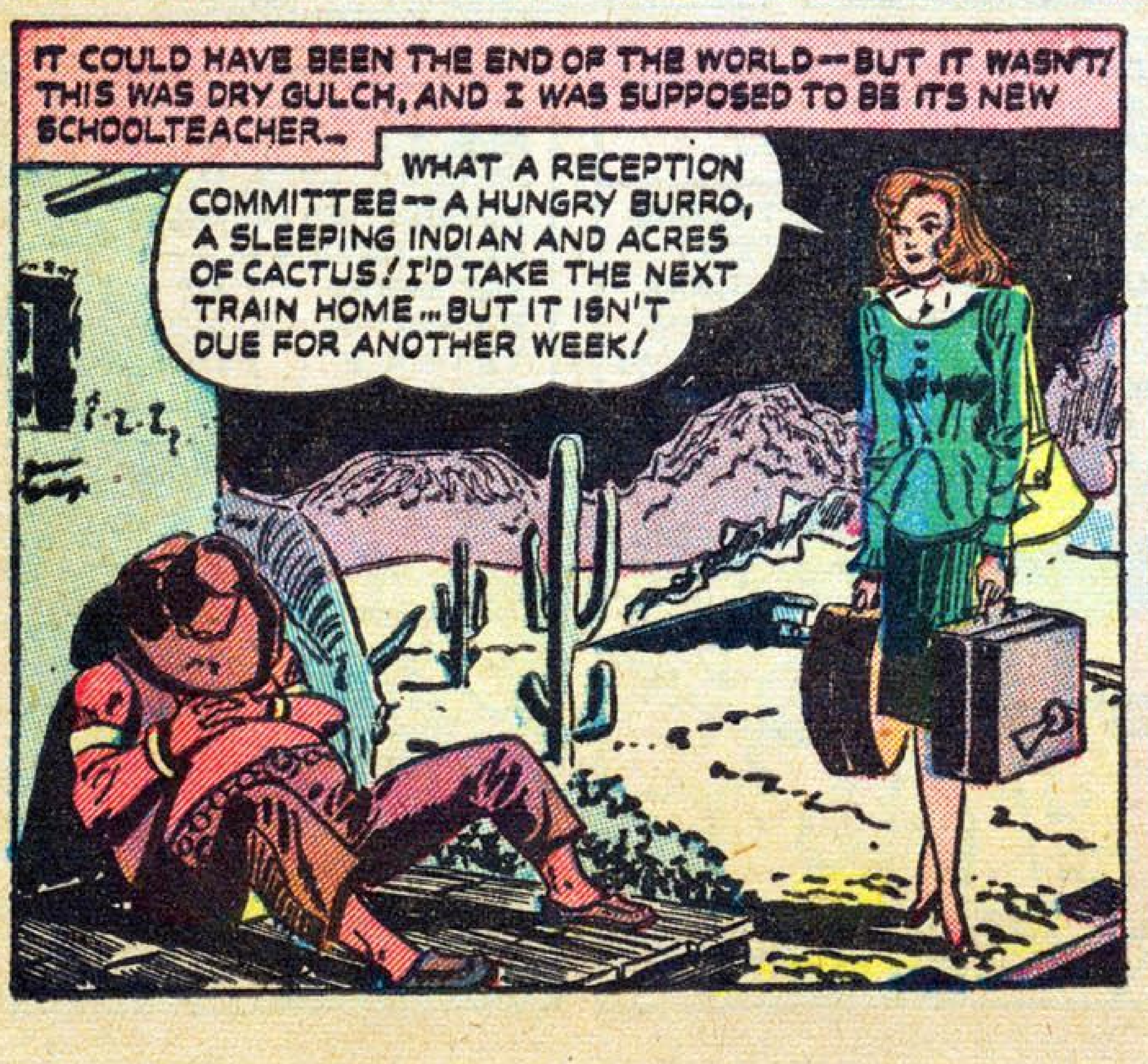
Rick smiled down at me. His eyes were full of love. "Yes sir," he said. "You'll be a wonderful sister-in-law for her!"

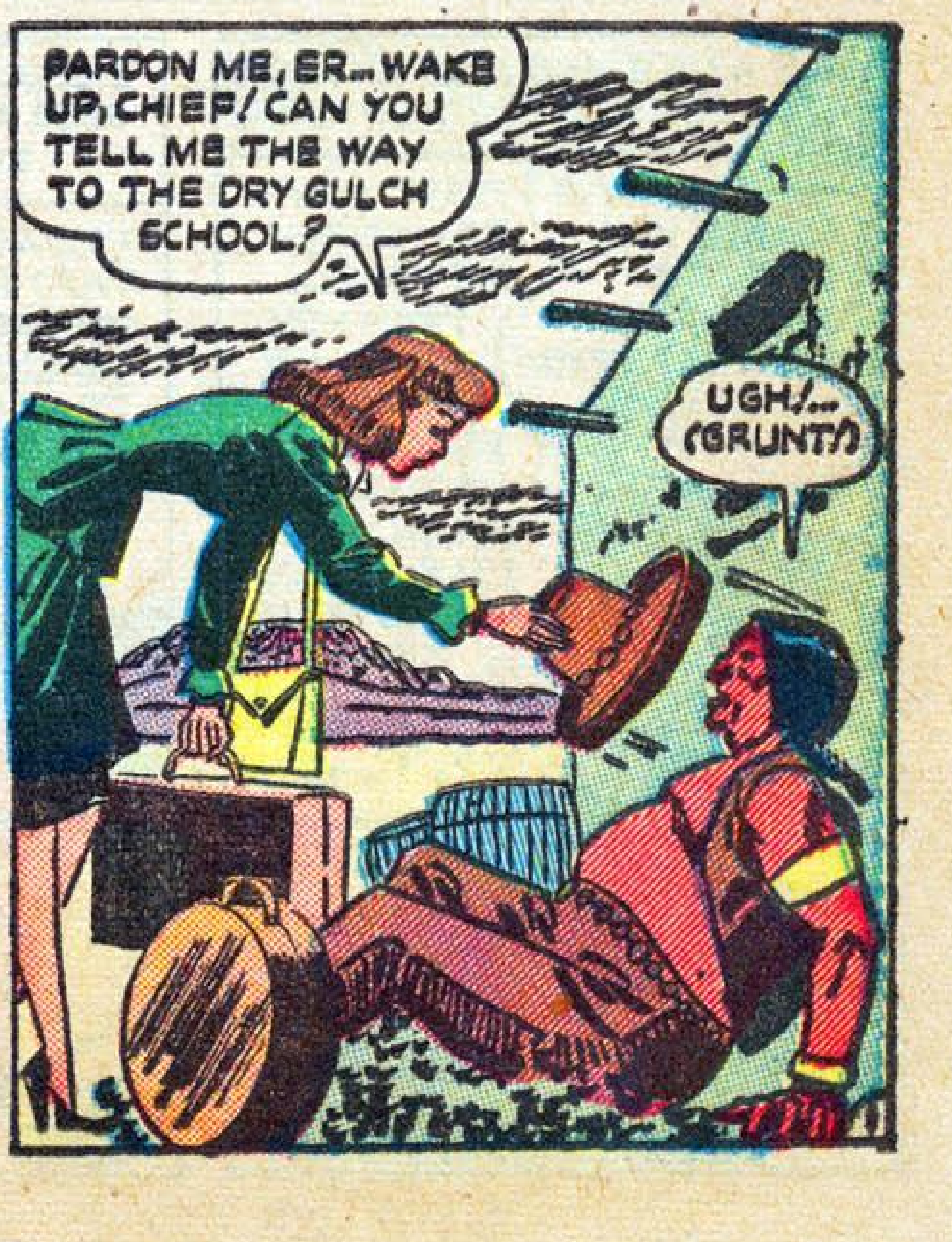
Then he kissed me, and it was like those nights in the shadows of the pines, only now it was even more wonderful, the way I knew it always would be.

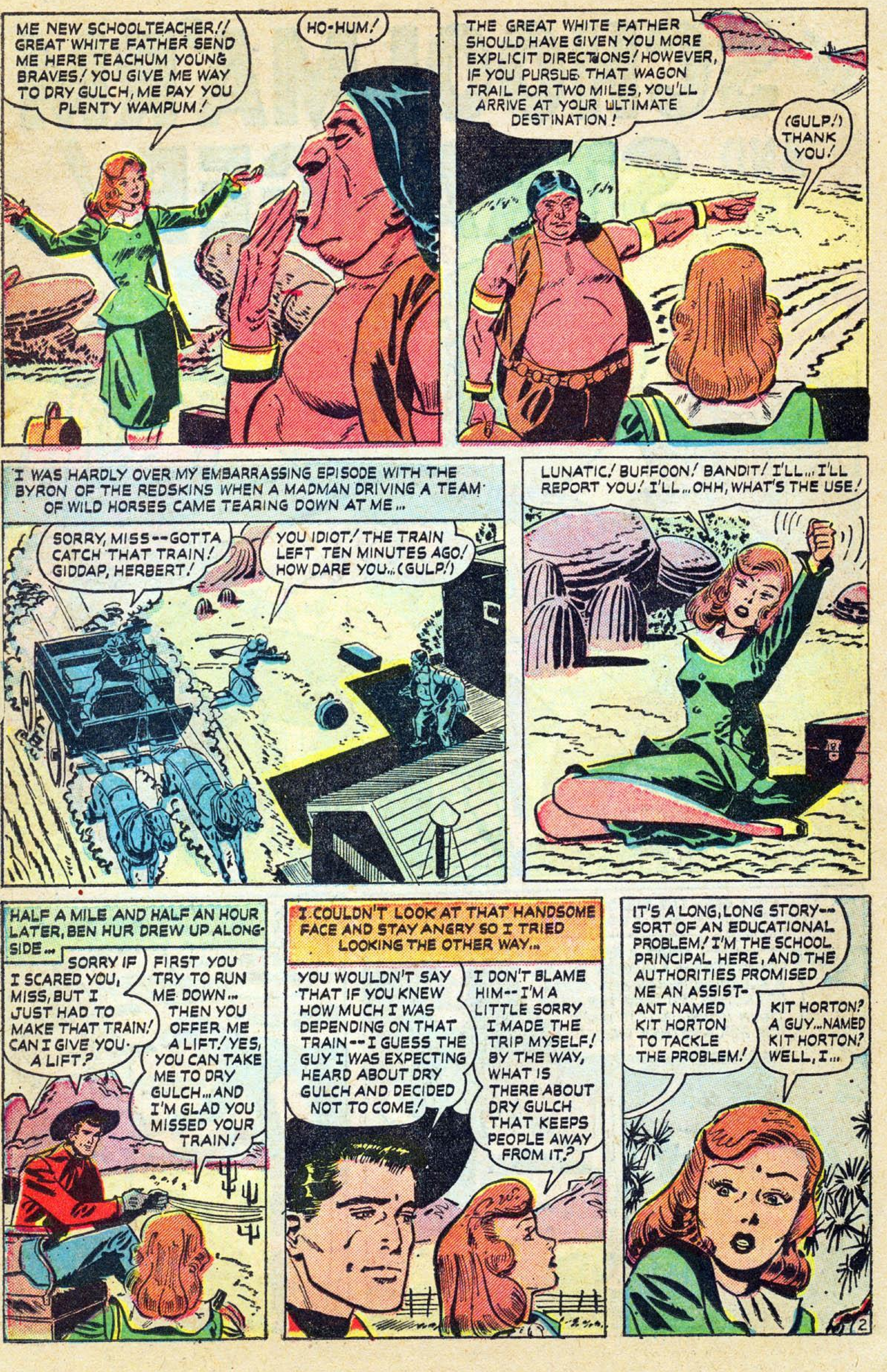
THE END 7080

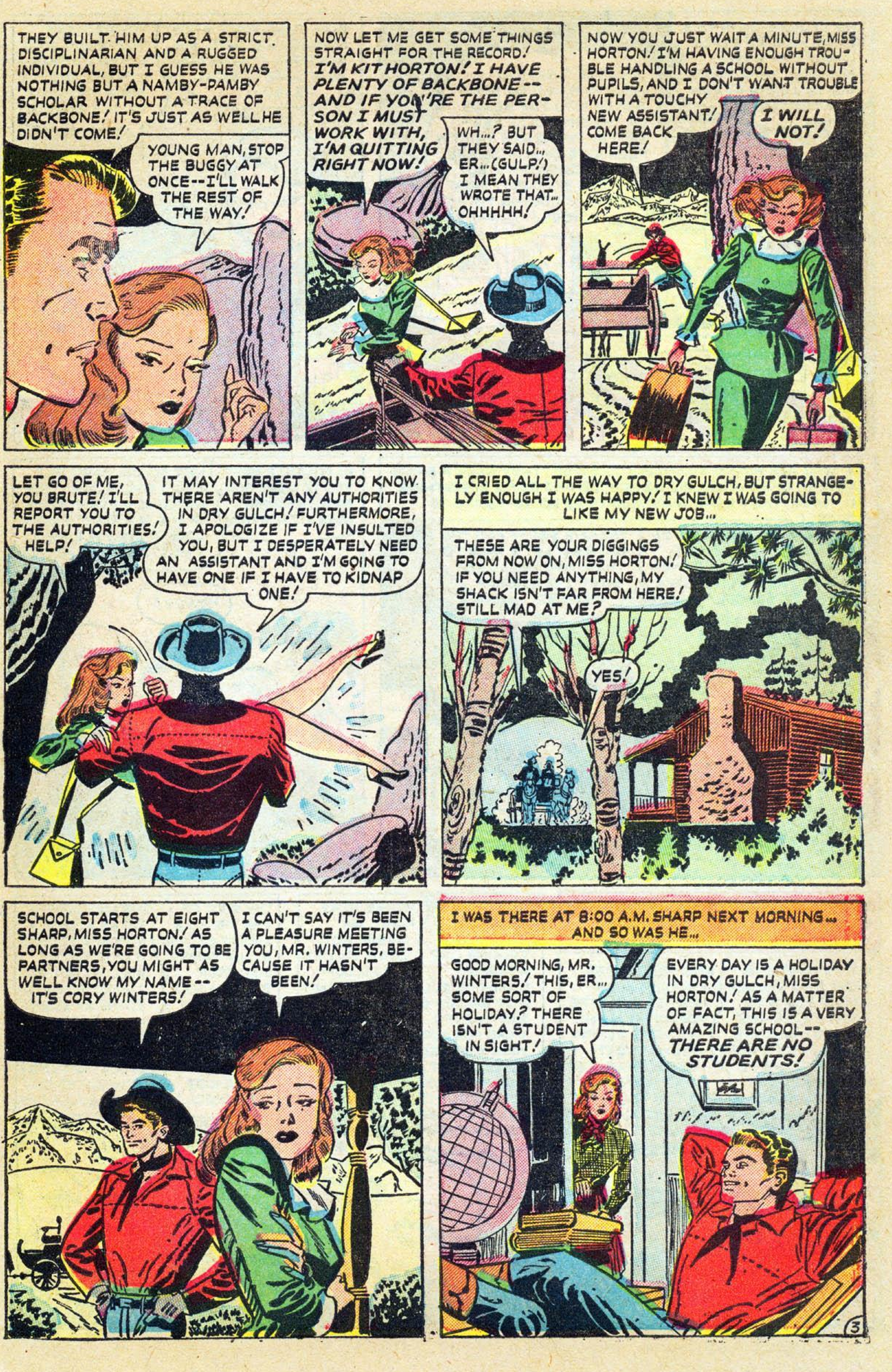
THE SCHOOLMA'RM AND THE STRANGER!

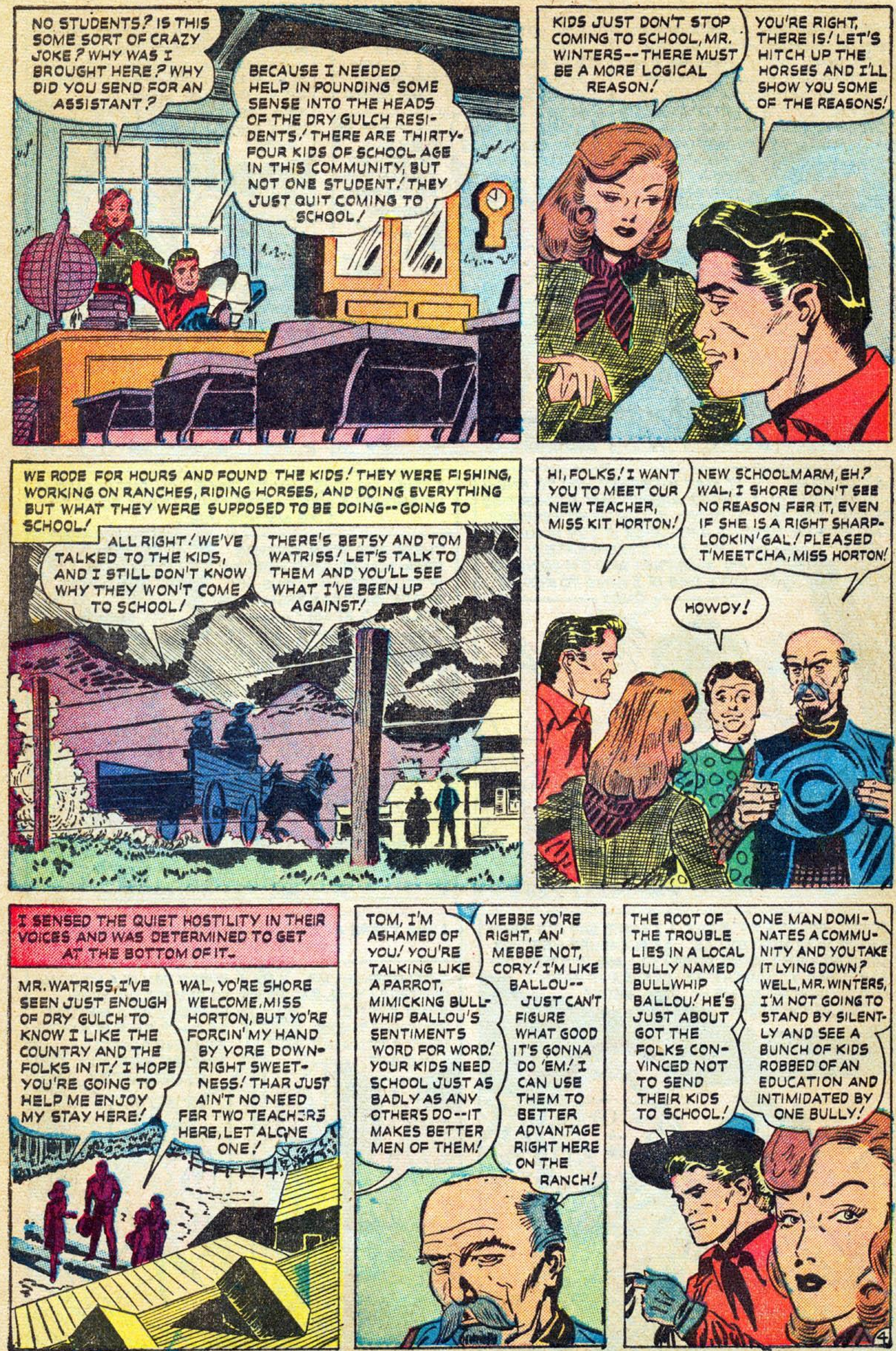

A MYSTERIOUSLY EMPTY SCHOOLHOUSE, A KILLER WITH A BULL WHIP, AND A LONE GIRL IN THE UNTAMED TOWN OF DRY GULCH! LITTLE DID I DREAM THAT AMIDST ALL THE ADVENTURE AND PERIL, I'D FIND ROMANCE!
6985


IT COULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF THE WORLD--BUT IT WASN'T! THIS WAS DRY GULCH, AND I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ITS NEW SCHOOLTEACHER...
WHAT A RECEPTION COMMITTEE--A HUNGRY BURRO, A SLEEPING INDIAN AND ACRES OF CACTUS! I'D TAKE THE NEXT TRAIN HOME...BUT IT ISN'T DUE FOR ANOTHER WEEK!

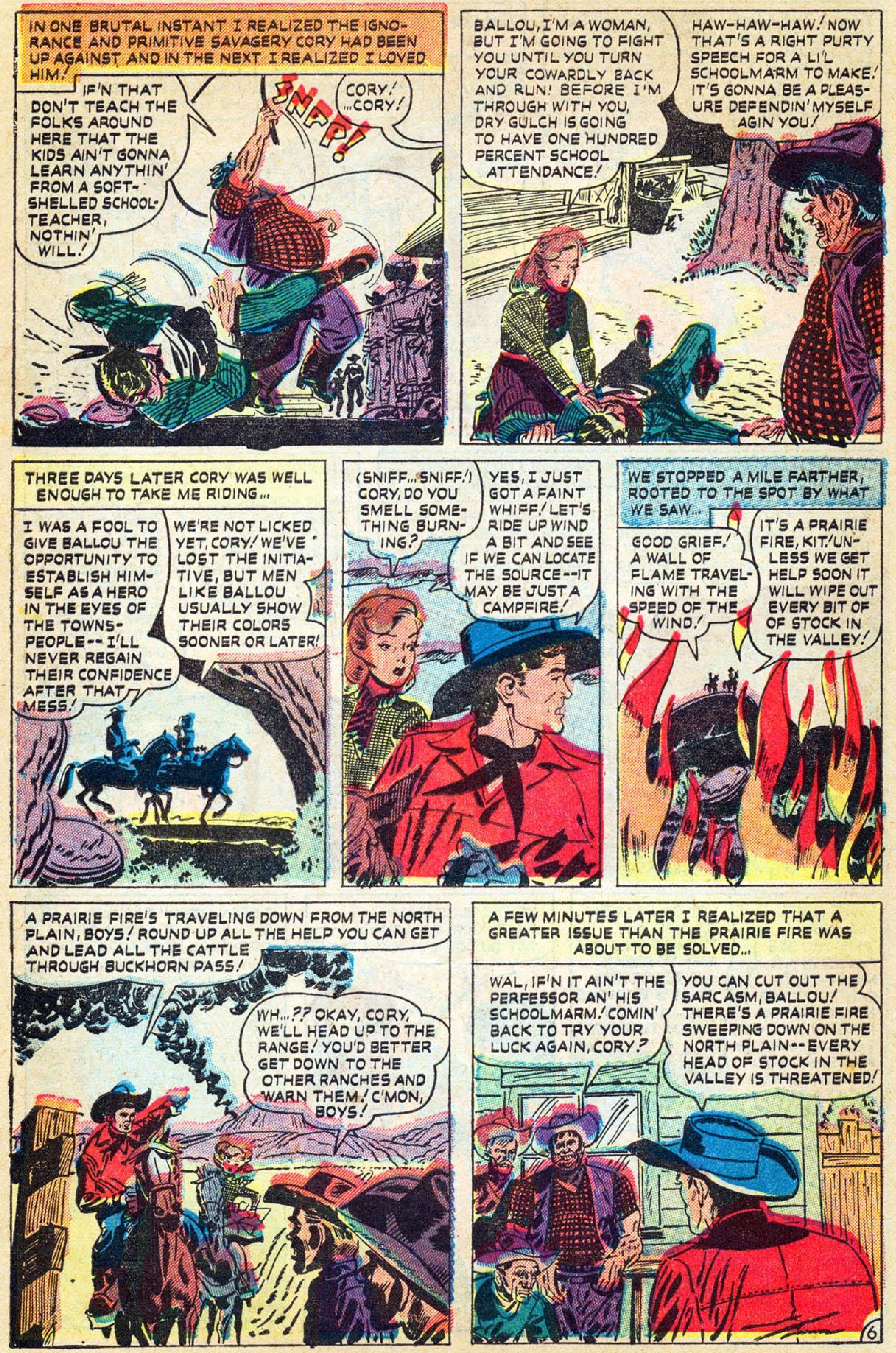

PARDON ME, ER...WAKE UP, CHIEF! CAN YOU TELL ME THE WAY TO THE DRY GULCH SCHOOL?
UGH!... (GRUNT!)

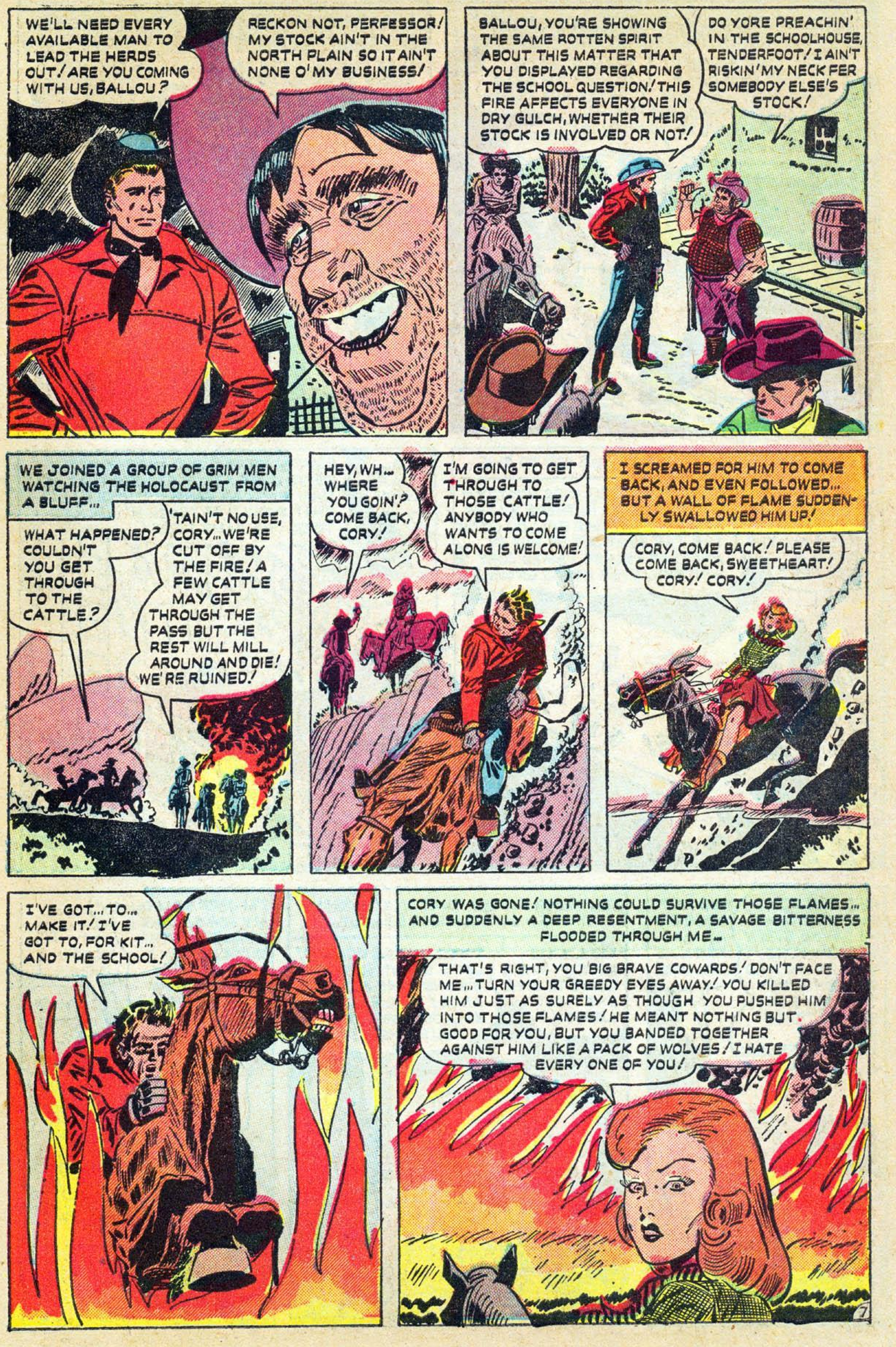

ME NEW SCHOOLTEACHER!! GREAT WHITE FATHER SEND ME HERE TEACHUM YOUNG BRAVES! YOU GIVE ME WAY TO DRY GULCH, ME PAY YOU PLENTY WAMPUM!
HO-HUM!
THE GREAT WHITE FATHER SHOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU MORE EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS! HOWEVER, IF YOU PURSUE THAT WAGON TRAIL FOR TWO MILES, YOU'LL ARRIVE AT YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINATION!
(GULP!) THANK YOU!
I WAS HARDLY OVER MY EMBARRASSING EPISODE WITH THE BYRON OF THE REDSKINS WHEN A MADMAN DRIVING A TEAM OF WILD HORSES CAME TEARING DOWN AT ME...
SORRY, MISS--GOTTA CATCH THAT TRAIN! GIDDAP, HERBERT!
YOU IDIOT! THE TRAIN LEFT TEN MINUTES AGO! HOW DARE YOU...(GULP!)
LUNATIC! BUFFOON! BANDIT! I'LL... I'LL REPORT YOU! I'LL...OHH, WHAT'S THE USE!
HALF A MILE AND HALF AN HOUR LATER, BEN HUR DREW UP ALONGSIDE...
SORRY IF I SCARED YOU, MISS, BUT I JUST HAD TO MAKE THAT TRAIN! CAN I GIVE YOU A LIFT?
FIRST YOU TRY TO RUN ME DOWN... THEN YOU OFFER ME A LIFT! YES, YOU CAN TAKE ME TO DRY GULCH... AND I'M GLAD YOU MISSED YOUR TRAIN!
I COULDN'T LOOK AT THAT HANDSOME FACE AND STAY ANGRY SO I TRIED LOOKING THE OTHER WAY...
YOU WOULDN'T SAY THAT IF YOU KNEW HOW MUCH I WAS DEPENDING ON THAT TRAIN--I GUESS THE GUY I WAS EXPECTING HEARD ABOUT DRY GULCH AND DECIDED NOT TO COME!
I DON'T BLAME HIM--I'M A LITTLE SORRY I MADE THE TRIP MYSELF! BY THE WAY, WHAT IS THERE ABOUT DRY GULCH THAT KEEPS PEOPLE AWAY FROM IT?
IT'S A LONG, LONG STORY--SORT OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM! I'M THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL HERE, AND THE AUTHORITIES PROMISED ME AN ASSISTANT NAMED KIT HORTON TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM!
KIT HORTON? A GUY...NAMED KIT HORTON? WELL, I...


THEY BUILT HIM UP AS A STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN AND A RUGGED INDIVIDUAL, BUT I GUESS HE WAS NOTHING BUT A NAMBY-PAMBY SCHOLAR WITHOUT A TRACE OF BACKBONE! IT'S JUST AS WELL HE DIDN'T COME!
YOUNG MAN, STOP THE BUGGY AT ONCE--I'LL WALK THE REST OF THE WAY!
NOW LET ME GET SOME THINGS STRAIGHT FOR THE RECORD! *I'M KIT HORTON! I HAVE PLENTY OF BACKBONE--AND IF YOU'RE THE PERSON I MUST WORK WITH, I'M QUITTING RIGHT NOW!*
WH...? BUT THEY SAID... ER...(GULP!) I MEAN THEY WROTE THAT... OHHHHH!
NOW YOU JUST WAIT A MINUTE, MISS HORTON! I'M HAVING ENOUGH TROUBLE HANDLING A SCHOOL WITHOUT PUPILS, AND I DON'T WANT TROUBLE WITH A TOUCHY NEW ASSISTANT! COME BACK HERE!
I WILL NOT!
LET GO OF ME, YOU BRUTE! I'LL REPORT YOU TO THE AUTHORITIES! HELP!
IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW THERE AREN'T ANY AUTHORITIES IN DRY GULCH! FURTHERMORE, I APOLOGIZE IF I'VE INSULTED YOU, BUT I DESPERATELY NEED AN ASSISTANT AND I'M GOING TO HAVE ONE IF I HAVE TO KIDNAP ONE!
I CRIED ALL THE WAY TO DRY GULCH, BUT STRANGELY ENOUGH I WAS HAPPY! I KNEW I WAS GOING TO LIKE MY NEW JOB...
THESE ARE YOUR DIGGINGS FROM NOW ON, MISS HORTON! IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, MY SHACK ISN'T FAR FROM HERE! STILL MAD AT ME?
YES!
SCHOOL STARTS AT EIGHT SHARP, MISS HORTON! AS LONG AS WE'RE GOING TO BE PARTNERS, YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW MY NAME--IT'S CORY WINTERS!
I CAN'T SAY IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE MEETING YOU, MR. WINTERS, BECAUSE IT HASN'T BEEN!
I WAS THERE AT 8:00 A.M. SHARP NEXT MORNING... AND SO WAS HE...
GOOD MORNING, MR. WINTERS! THIS, ER... SOME SORT OF HOLIDAY? THERE ISN'T A STUDENT IN SIGHT!
EVERY DAY IS A HOLIDAY IN DRY GULCH, MISS HORTON! AS A MATTER OF FACT, THIS IS A VERY AMAZING SCHOOL--*THERE ARE NO STUDENTS!*


NO STUDENTS? IS THIS SOME SORT OF CRAZY JOKE? WHY WAS I BROUGHT HERE? WHY DID YOU SEND FOR AN ASSISTANT?
BECAUSE I NEEDED HELP IN POUNDING SOME SENSE INTO THE HEADS OF THE DRY GULCH RESIDENTS! THERE ARE THIRTY-FOUR KIDS OF SCHOOL AGE IN THIS COMMUNITY, BUT NOT ONE STUDENT! THEY JUST QUIT COMING TO SCHOOL!
KIDS JUST DON'T STOP COMING TO SCHOOL, MR. WINTERS--THERE MUST BE A MORE LOGICAL REASON!
YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE IS! LET'S HITCH UP THE HORSES AND I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OF THE REASONS!
WE RODE FOR HOURS AND FOUND THE KIDS! THEY WERE FISHING, WORKING ON RANCHES, RIDING HORSES, AND DOING EVERYTHING BUT WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING--GOING TO SCHOOL!
ALL RIGHT! WE'VE TALKED TO THE KIDS, AND I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY THEY WON'T COME TO SCHOOL!
THERE'S BETSY AND TOM WATRISS! LET'S TALK TO THEM AND YOU'LL SEE WHAT I'VE BEEN UP AGAINST!
HI, FOLKS! I WANT YOU TO MEET OUR NEW TEACHER, MISS KIT HORTON!
NEW SCHOOLMARM, EH? WAL, I SHORE DON'T SEE NO REASON FER IT, EVEN IF SHE IS A RIGHT SHARP-LOOKIN' GAL! PLEASED T'MEETCHA, MISS HORTON!
HOWDY!
I SENSED THE QUIET HOSTILITY IN THEIR VOICES AND WAS DETERMINED TO GET AT THE BOTTOM OF IT--
MR. WATRISS, I'VE SEEN JUST ENOUGH OF DRY GULCH TO KNOW I LIKE THE COUNTRY AND THE FOLKS IN IT! I HOPE YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME ENJOY MY STAY HERE!
WAL, YO'RE SHORE WELCOME, MISS HORTON, BUT YO'RE FORCIN' MY HAND BY YORE DOWNRIGHT SWEETNESS! THAR JUST AIN'T NO NEED FER TWO TEACHERS HERE, LET ALONE ONE!
TOM, I'M ASHAMED OF YOU! YOU'RE TALKING LIKE A PARROT, MIMICKING BULLWHIP BALLOU'S SENTIMENTS WORD FOR WORD! YOUR KIDS NEED SCHOOL JUST AS BADLY AS ANY OTHERS DO--IT MAKES BETTER MEN OF THEM!
MEBBE YO'RE RIGHT, AN' MEBBE NOT, CORY! I'M LIKE BALLOU--JUST CAN'T FIGURE WHAT GOOD IT'S GONNA DO 'EM! I CAN USE THEM TO BETTER ADVANTAGE RIGHT HERE ON THE RANCH!
THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE LIES IN A LOCAL BULLY NAMED BULLWHIP BALLOU! HE'S JUST ABOUT GOT THE FOLKS CONVINCED NOT TO SEND THEIR KIDS TO SCHOOL!
ONE MAN DOMINATES A COMMUNITY AND YOU TAKE IT LYING DOWN? WELL, MR. WINTERS, I'M NOT GOING TO STAND BY SILENTLY AND SEE A BUNCH OF KIDS ROBBED OF AN EDUCATION AND INTIMIDATED BY ONE BULLY!

I FELT THE SAME WAY AT ONE TIME, BUT I KNOW BETTER NOW! JUST HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE FIGHT THIS THING?
VERY SIMPLY! WE'LL PUT UP POSTERS AND CALL A MEETING OF THE PARENTS--WITH COMMON SENSE AND HONEST TALK WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THEM, DESPITE THIS FELLOW BALLOU!
THE POSTERS WERE UP AND TWO DAYS LATER WE WERE READY FOR OUR FIRST TEST AT THE GRANGE HALL...
THERE'S BALLOU NOW AND HE'S LOOKING FOR TROUBLE!
WELL, LET'S GIVE IT TO HIM! JUST WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, ANYWAY?
THE ATMOSPHERE WAS CHARGED WITH DANGER AND I SENSED THE ISSUE WOULD BE DECIDED OUTSIDE THE HALL...
WAL, IF IT AIN'T THE PERFESSOR TRYIN' TO RAISE A RUCKUS WITH HIS NEW REINFORCEMENTS...AN' RIGHT PURTY HELP YE'VE PICKED, CORY!
I DON'T NEED REINFORCEMENTS FOR MEN LIKE YOU, BALLOU! A FEW WELL-CHOSEN WORDS OUGHT TO SQUELCH ANY BROWBEATING BULLY!
YOU AIN'T GONNA GET THE CHANCE TO SPEAK THEM WORDS, CORY! THE FOLKS OF DRY GULCH ARE FAIR CONVINCED THAT BOOK LARNIN' AIN'T GONNA TEACH KIDS TO MILK COWS AND RIDE HERD!
WE'LL LET THIS MEETING DECIDE THAT ISSUE! THERE HAPPENS TO BE A LAW IN THIS STATE REQUIRING EDUCATION FOR ALL KIDS AND I'M HERE TO SEE THEY GET IT! WE'RE GOING TO HOLD A MEETING HERE AND NOW!
DON'T FIGHT HIM, CORY! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS? CAN'T YOU SEE HE CAN RETAIN HIS GRIP ON THESE PEOPLE SIMPLY BY PRETENDING TO BE THEIR CHAMPION? WE CAN WIN THIS ISSUE PEACEFULLY!
YOU DON'T KNOW BALLOU, KIT! THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO BREAK HIS POWER AND THAT'S BY FACING HIM... AND IT'S ABOUT TIME, TOO!
YOU'RE BLOCKING THAT DOOR, BALLOU--GET OUT OF MY WAY!
WH...??
I BEEN ITCHIN' TO TANGLE WITH YOU FOR A LONG TIME, CORY! ALL YORE EDDICATION CAN'T MAKE YOU A MATCH FER A BULLWHIP!
CRACK!
5


IN ONE BRUTAL INSTANT I REALIZED THE IGNORANCE AND PRIMITIVE SAVAGERY CORY HAD BEEN UP AGAINST AND IN THE NEXT I REALIZED I LOVED HIM!
IF'N THAT DON'T TEACH THE FOLKS AROUND HERE THAT THE KIDS AIN'T GONNA LEARN ANYTHIN' FROM A SOFT-SHELLED SCHOOLTEACHER, NOTHIN' WILL!
SNAP!
CORY! ...CORY!
BALLOU, I'M A WOMAN, BUT I'M GOING TO FIGHT YOU UNTIL YOU TURN YOUR COWARDLY BACK AND RUN! BEFORE I'M THROUGH WITH YOU, DRY GULCH IS GOING TO HAVE ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE!
HAW-HAW-HAW! NOW THAT'S A RIGHT PURTY SPEECH FOR A LI'L SCHOOLMARM TO MAKE! IT'S GONNA BE A PLEASURE DEFENDIN' MYSELF AGIN YOU!
THREE DAYS LATER CORY WAS WELL ENOUGH TO TAKE ME RIDING...
I WAS A FOOL TO GIVE BALLOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF AS A HERO IN THE EYES OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE-- I'LL NEVER REGAIN THEIR CONFIDENCE AFTER THAT MESS!
WE'RE NOT LICKED YET, CORY! WE'VE LOST THE INITIATIVE, BUT MEN LIKE BALLOU USUALLY SHOW THEIR COLORS SOONER OR LATER!
(SNIFF... SNIFF!) CORY, DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING BURNING?
YES, I JUST GOT A FAINT WHIFF! LET'S RIDE UP WIND A BIT AND SEE IF WE CAN LOCATE THE SOURCE--IT MAY BE JUST A CAMPFIRE!
WE STOPPED A MILE FARTHER, ROOTED TO THE SPOT BY WHAT WE SAW...
GOOD GRIEF! A WALL OF FLAME TRAVELING WITH THE SPEED OF THE WIND!
IT'S A PRAIRIE FIRE, KIT! UNLESS WE GET HELP SOON IT WILL WIPE OUT EVERY BIT OF OF STOCK IN THE VALLEY!
A PRAIRIE FIRE'S TRAVELING DOWN FROM THE NORTH PLAIN, BOYS! ROUND UP ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET AND LEAD ALL THE CATTLE THROUGH BUCKHORN PASS!
WH...?? OKAY, CORY, WE'LL HEAD UP TO THE RANGE! YOU'D BETTER GET DOWN TO THE OTHER RANCHES AND WARN THEM! C'MON, BOYS!
A FEW MINUTES LATER I REALIZED THAT A GREATER ISSUE THAN THE PRAIRIE FIRE WAS ABOUT TO BE SOLVED...
WAL, IF'N IT AIN'T THE PERFESSOR AN' HIS SCHOOLMARM! COMIN' BACK TO TRY YOUR LUCK AGAIN, CORY?
YOU CAN CUT OUT THE SARCASM, BALLOU! THERE'S A PRAIRIE FIRE SWEEPING DOWN ON THE NORTH PLAIN--EVERY HEAD OF STOCK IN THE VALLEY IS THREATENED!


WE'LL NEED EVERY AVAILABLE MAN TO LEAD THE HERDS OUT! ARE YOU COMING WITH US, BALLOU?
RECKON NOT, PERFESSOR! MY STOCK AIN'T IN THE NORTH PLAIN SO IT AIN'T NONE O' MY BUSINESS!
BALLOU, YOU'RE SHOWING THE SAME ROTTEN SPIRIT ABOUT THIS MATTER THAT YOU DISPLAYED REGARDING THE SCHOOL QUESTION! THIS FIRE AFFECTS EVERYONE IN DRY GULCH, WHETHER THEIR STOCK IS INVOLVED OR NOT!
DO YORE PREACHIN' IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE, TENDERFOOT! I AIN'T RISKIN' MY NECK FER SOMEBODY ELSE'S STOCK!
WE JOINED A GROUP OF GRIM MEN WATCHING THE HOLOCAUST FROM A BLUFF...
WHAT HAPPENED? COULDN'T YOU GET THROUGH TO THE CATTLE?
'TAIN'T NO USE, CORY... WE'RE CUT OFF BY THE FIRE! A FEW CATTLE MAY GET THROUGH THE PASS BUT THE REST WILL MILL AROUND AND DIE! WE'RE RUINED!
HEY, WH... WHERE YOU GOIN'? COME BACK, CORY!
I'M GOING TO GET THROUGH TO THOSE CATTLE! ANYBODY WHO WANTS TO COME ALONG IS WELCOME!
I SCREAMED FOR HIM TO COME BACK, AND EVEN FOLLOWED... BUT A WALL OF FLAME SUDDENLY SWALLOWED HIM UP!
CORY, COME BACK! PLEASE COME BACK, SWEETHEART! CORY! CORY!
I'VE GOT... TO... MAKE IT! I'VE GOT TO, FOR KIT... AND THE SCHOOL!
CORY WAS GONE! NOTHING COULD SURVIVE THOSE FLAMES... AND SUDDENLY A DEEP RESENTMENT, A SAVAGE BITTERNESS FLOODED THROUGH ME...
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU BIG BRAVE COWARDS! DON'T FACE ME... TURN YOUR GREEDY EYES AWAY! YOU KILLED HIM JUST AS SURELY AS THOUGH YOU PUSHED HIM INTO THOSE FLAMES! HE MEANT NOTHING BUT GOOD FOR YOU, BUT YOU BANDED TOGETHER AGAINST HIM LIKE A PACK OF WOLVES! I HATE EVERY ONE OF YOU!

I PACKED SILENTLY, NOT KNOWING THAT A GHASTLY APPARITION HAD SUDDENLY APPEARED IN THE VILLAGE...
CORY... CORY WINTERS! WE JUST HEARD THE NEWS, CORY--YOU GOT THE CATTLE THROUGH! WE'RE GRATEFUL TO YOU, CORY!
THANKS! GO TELL BALLOU I'M GOING AFTER HIM, TYSON!
I WAS READY TO LEAVE, WHEN I HEARD THE HOOFS THUNDERING UP TO THE DOOR...
MISS HORTON, WE'VE BROUGHT ALONG AN EXTRA HORSE FOR YOU! THAR'S A BIG PARTY GOIN' ON IN THE VILLAGE AN' WE RECKONED YE WOULDN'T WANT TO MISS IT!
PARTY!...BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I STILL DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHEN WE GOT TO THE VILLAGE...
BUT WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S ALL THE TERRIBLE NOISE FOR?
WAL, I'LL TELL YOU, MISS HORTON--THAR'S A FELLER IN THERE BY THE NAME O' BULLWHIP BALLOU GITTIN' THE TAR BEAT OUT OF HIM BY ANOTHER FELLER NAMED CORY WINTERS! EVER HEARD OF HIM?
SLAM!
SOCK!
SPLAT!
BANG!
IT'S... (GULP!)... CORY!
RECKON YO'RE RIGHT, MISS HORTON! WE'VE JUST ABOUT DECIDED THAT ANY MAN WHO CAN HANDLE HIMSELF LIKE THAT SHOULD BE TEACHIN' OUR KIDS TO DO THE SAME THING!
RESTA
HE'S OUR BOY, MISS HORTON--HE SAVED EVERY STEER IN THE VALLEY AN' HAD ENOUGH GUMPTION LEFT IN HIM TO TEACH BALLOU A LESSON, BESIDES!
HE'S NOT YOUR BOY AT ALL! HE'S MINE ...ALL MINE!
I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT NEXT MORNING! IT WAS A SCHOOLHOUSE SELLOUT...
WELL, MISS HORTON, WHO'S GOING TO GIVE THE FIRST LESSON?
I WILL, IN ONE MOMENT! LET'S START WITH THE B'S AND TAKE ATTENDANCE! BALLOU...JEFF BALLOU, ANSWER IF YOU'RE HERE!
I'M JEFF BALLOU, AN' MY POP SAID HE'D WHALE THE TAR OUTA ME IF'N I MISS A SINGLE CLASS OR PLAY HOOKEY EVEN ONCE'T!
VICTORY IS OURS!
AMEN!
The End

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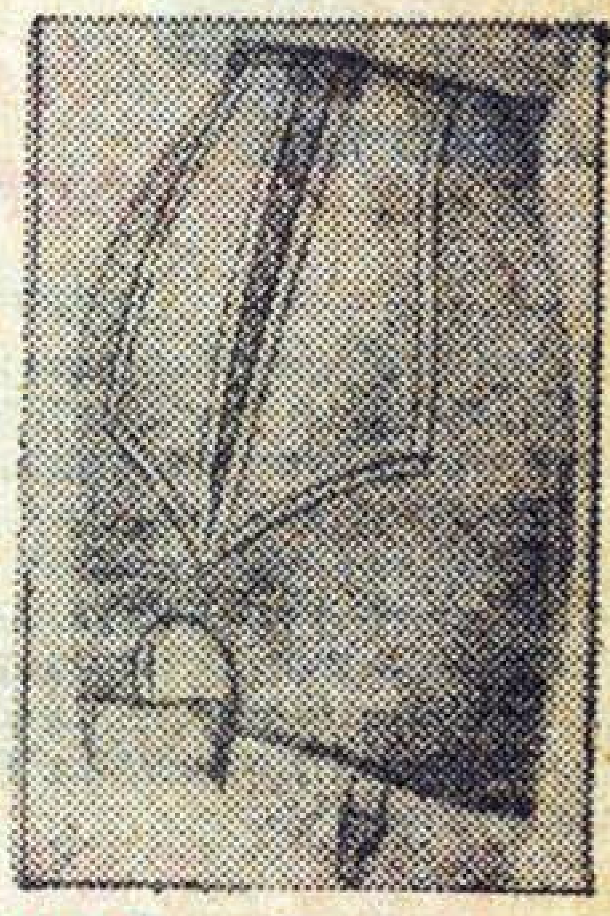

The UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT takes weight off tired feet and gives you a more alluring, more daringly feminine, curvaceous figure the instant you put it on. It gives you lovely curves just in the *right places,* with no unwanted bulges in the wrong ones. It whittles your waist line to *nothingness* no matter what shape you may now have. *It's easily adjusted—always comfortable!*

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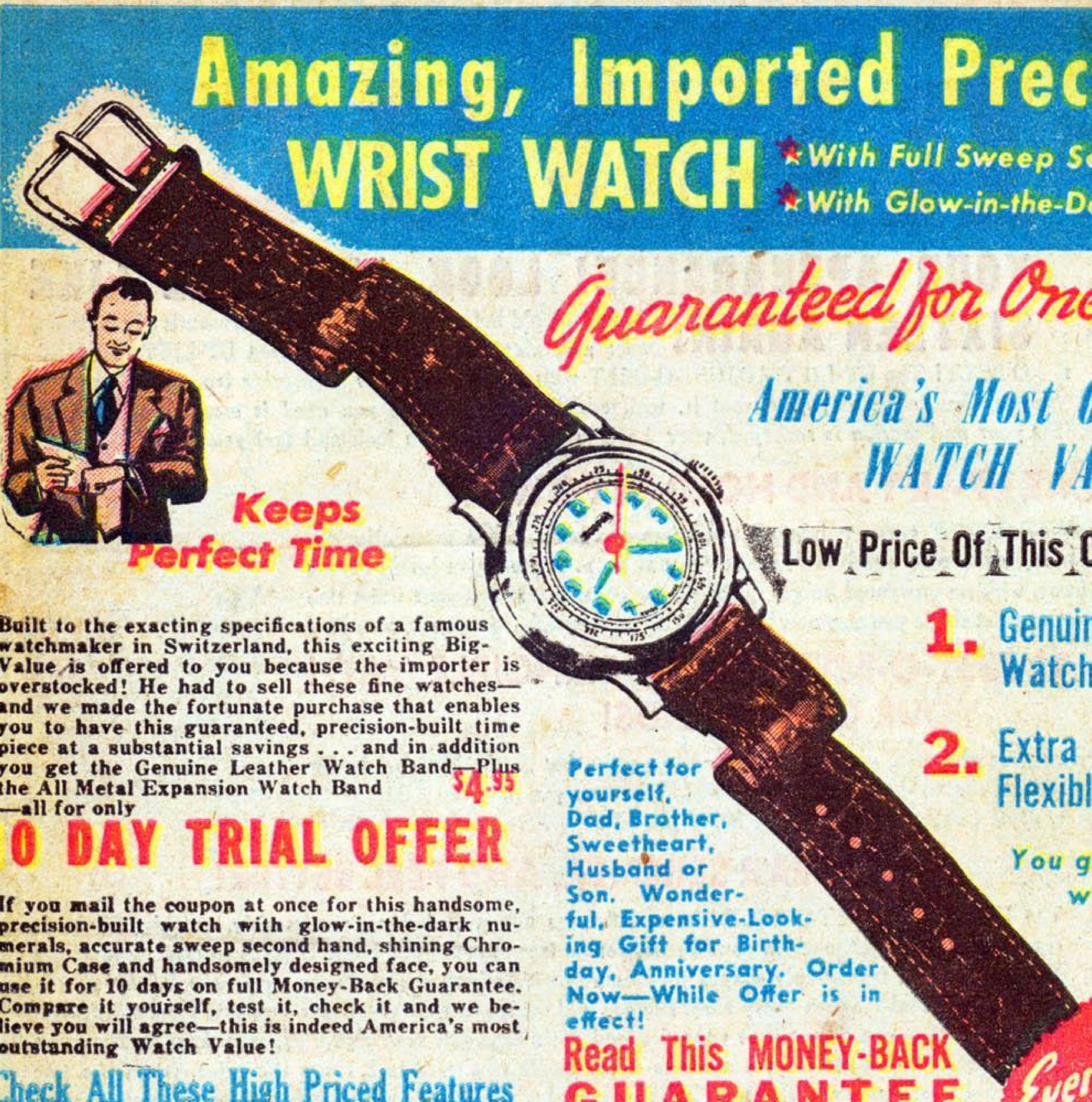

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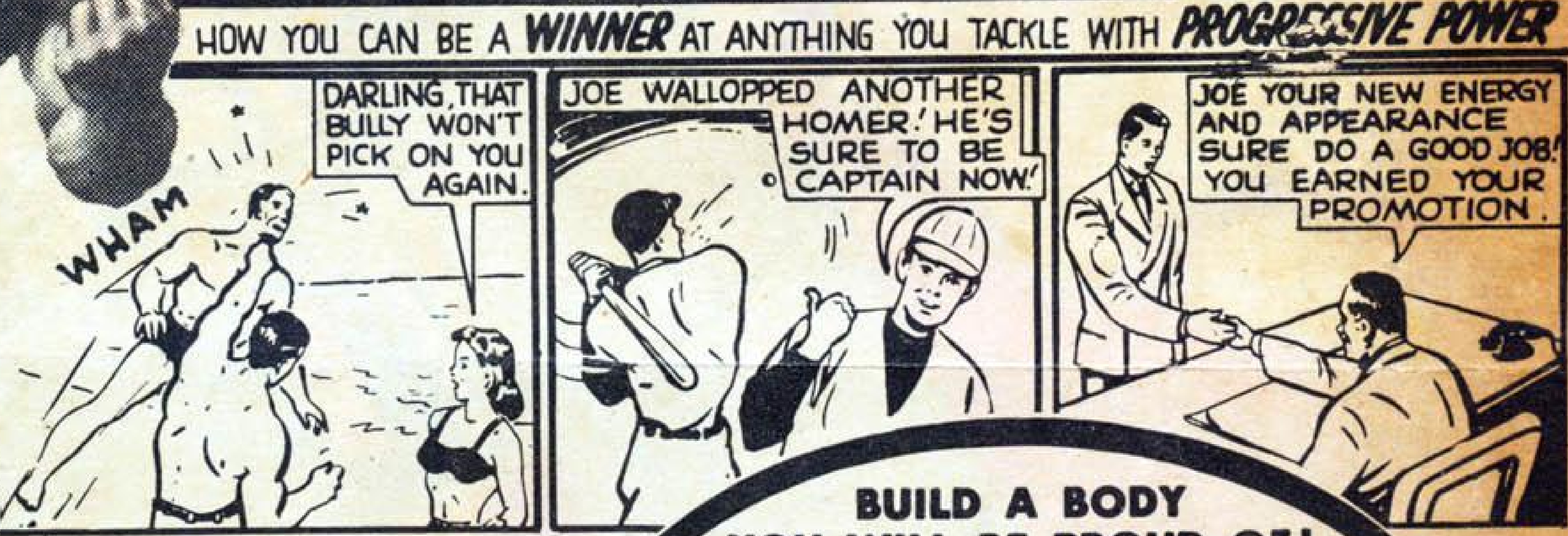
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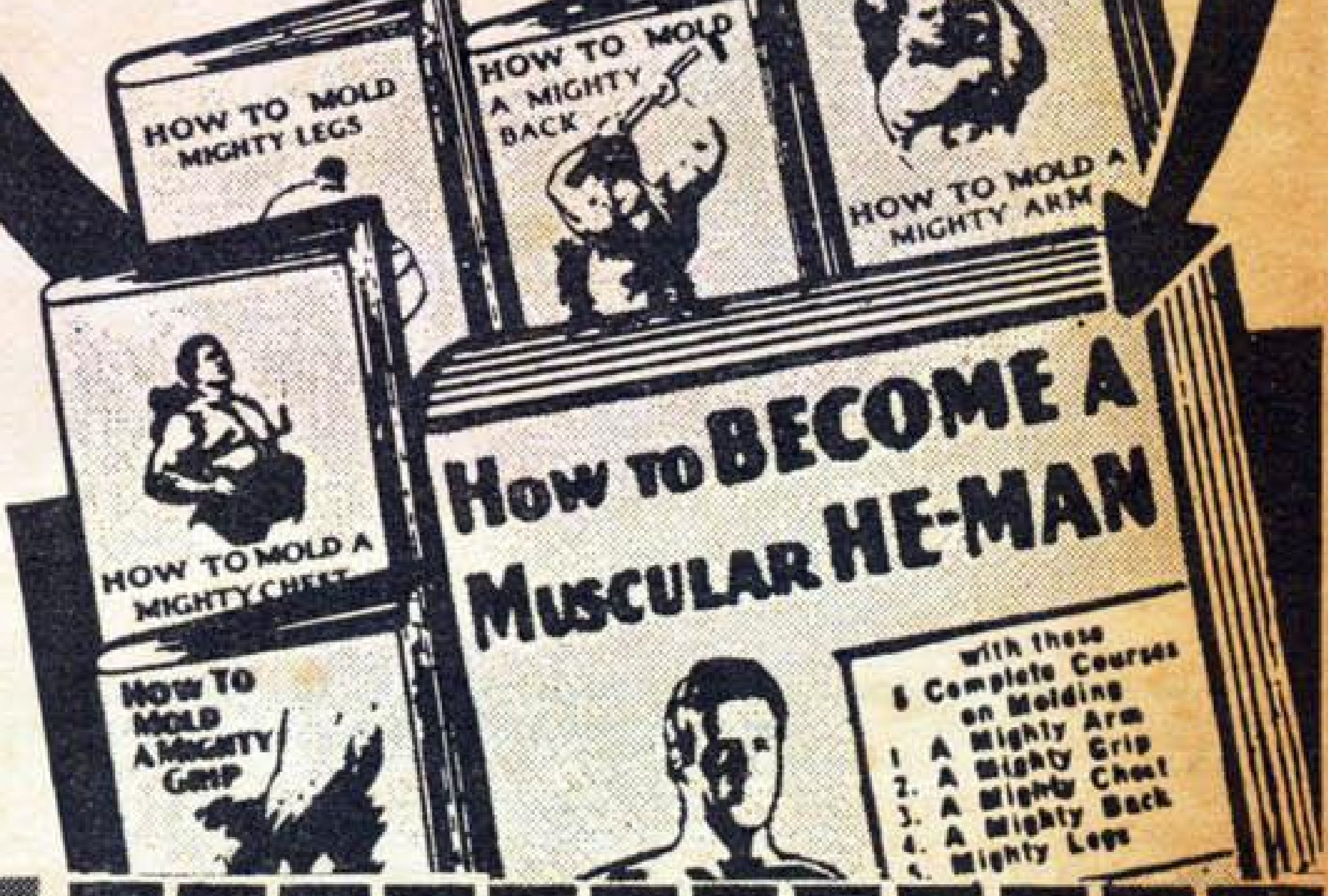
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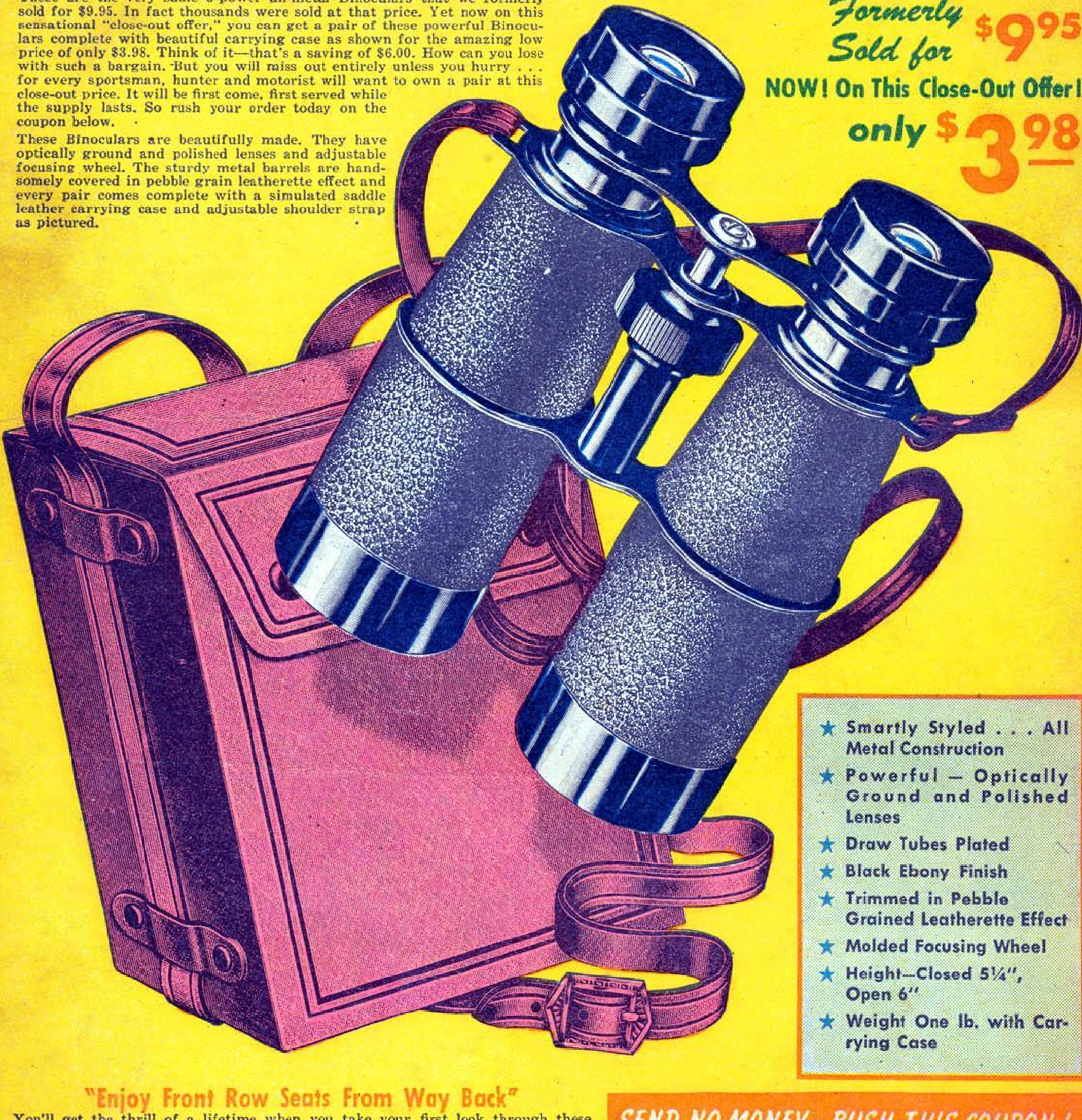

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